DISTRESSING DIALOGUES

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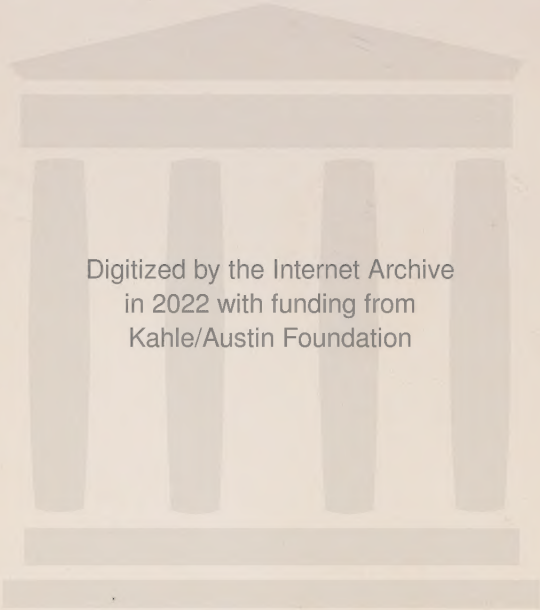

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DISTRESSING DIALOGUES

BY

NANCY BOYD, pseud.

With a Preface by

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY, 1892-1950

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DISTRESSING DIALOGUES

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Preface

Miss Boyd has asked me to write a preface to these dialogues, with which, having followed them eagerly as they appeared from time to time in the pages of Vanity Fair, I was already familiar. I am no friend of prefaces, but if there must be one to this book, it should come from me, who was its author's earliest admirer. I take pleasure in recommending to the public these excellent small satires, from the pen of one in whose work I have a never-failing interest and delight.

EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY.

Tokyo, May 6, 1924.

I LIKE AMERICANS

I LIKE AMERICANS

I LIKE Americans.
You may say what you will, they are the nicest people in the world.

They sleep with their windows open.
Their bath-tubs are never dry.

They are not grown-up yet. They still believe in Santa Claus.
They are terribly in earnest.
But they laugh at everything.

They know that one roll does not make a breakfast.
Nor one vermouth a cocktail.

I like Americans.
They smoke with their meals.

The Italians are nice.
But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They have been told that they live in a warm climate.

And they refuse to heat their houses.
They are forever sobbing Puccini.
They no longer have lions about, to prey on Christian flesh.
But they have more than a sufficient supply of certain smaller carnivora.

And if you walk in the street alone, somebody pinches you.

I like Americans.
They give you the matches free.

The Austrians are nice.
But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They eat sausages between the acts at the opera.
But they make you go out into the snow to smoke.

They are gentle and friendly. They will walk ten blocks out of their way to show you your way.
But they serve you paper napkins at the table.
And the sleeves of their tailored blouses are gathered at the shoulder.
And they don't know how to do their hair.

I like Americans.
They dance so well.

The Hungarians are nice.
But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They make beautiful shoes.
Which are guaranteed to squeak for a year.

Their native tongue is like a typewriter in the next room, and every word beginning with the shift-key.

Their wines are too sweet.

I like Americans.

They are the only men in the world, the sight of whom in their shirt-sleeves is not rumpled, embryonic, and agonizing.
They wear belts instead of suspenders.

The French are nice.
But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They wear the most charming frocks in the world.
And the most awkward underclothes.

Their shoes are too short.
Their ankles are too thick.
They are always forgetting where they put their razors.

They have no street-corner shoe-shining palaces, where a man can be a king for five minutes every day.

Nor any Sunday supplement.

Their mail-boxes are cleverly hidden slits in the wall of a cigar store.

They put all their cream into cheese.

Your morning cup of chicory is full of boiled strings.

If you want butter with your luncheon, they expect you to order radishes.

And they insist on serving the vegetables as if they were food.

I like Americans.

They make a lot of foolish laws.

But at least their cigarettes are not rolled by the government.

The material of which the French make their cigarettes would be used in America to enrich the fields.

In the city the French are delightful.

They kiss in the cafés and dine on the sidewalks.

Their dance halls are gay with paper ribbons and caps and colored balloons.

Their rudeness is more gracious than other people's courtesy.

But they are afraid of the water.
They drink it mixed with wine.
They swim with wings.

And they bathe with an atomizer.
Their conception of a sport suit is a black taffeta gown, long gloves with fringe on, a patent leather hand-bag, and a dish-mop dog.
In the country they are too darned funny for words.

I like Americans.
They carry such pretty umbrellas
The *Avenue de l'Opera* on a rainy day is just an avenue, on a rainy day.
But Fifth Avenue on a rainy day is an old-fashioned garden under a shower.

The French are a jolly lot.
Their cities have no traffic regulations.
And no speed limit.
And if you get run over, you have to pay a fine for getting in the way.

But they have no ear drums.
Paris is the loveliest city in the world.
Until she opens her mouth.

Should the French go forth to battle armed only with their taxi horns, they would drive all before them.

I would liefer live in a hammock slung under the "L" at Herald Square, than in a palace within ear-shot of the *Place de la Harmony.*

I like Americans.

They are so ridiculous.

They are always risking their lives to save a minute.

The pavement under their feet is red-hot.

They are the only people in the world who can eat their soup without a sound as of the tide coming in.

They sell their bread hygienically wrapped.

The Europeans sell it naked.

They carry it under the arm.

Drop it and pick it up.

Beat the horses with it.

And spank the children.

They deliver it at your apartment. You find it lying outside your door on the door-mat.

And European hotels are so hateful and irritating.

There is never an ash-tray in your bedroom.
Nor a waste-basket.
Nor a cake of soap.
No sweet little cake of new soap all sealed in paper!
Not even a sliver left behind by a former guest.
No soap.
No soap at all.

And there's always a dead man in a blanket across the head of the bed.
And you can't get him out. He's tied there.
And the pillow-slips are trimmed with broken buttons.
That scratch your ear.

Then there are their theatres.
They make you tip the usher.
And pay for your program.
The signal for the curtain to rise is the chopping of wood off stage.

Then the railroad system.
Especially in France.
Have to get there forty-five minutes ahead of train time, or stand in the aisle all day.
Pay for every pound of trunk.

Never a soul in sight who knows anything about anything.

No place to sit.

No place to powder up.

And before they will let you into the station at all, they insist on your pushing two sous into a slot-machine.

When you have just had your pocket picked of the last sou you had in the world.

And are expecting your only husband on the express from Havre.

I like Americans.

They let you play around in the Grand Central all you please.

Their parks are not locked at sunset.

And they always have plenty of paper bags.

Which are not made of back numbers of *Le Rire*.

The English are nice.

But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They wear much too much flannel.

No matter with whom they are dancing, they dance a solo.

And no matter where they go, they remain at home.

They are nice. They keep the tea-set at the office.

But the Americans keep the dish-pan in the music-room.

The English are an amusing people.

They are a tribe of shepherds, inhabiting a small island off the coast of France.

They are a simple and genial folk.

But they have one idiosyncrasy.

They persist in referring to their island as if it were the mainland.

The Irish are nice.

But they are not so nice as the Americans.

They are always rocking the boat.

I like Americans.

They either shoot the whole nickel, or give up the bones.

You may say what you will, they are the nicest people in the world.

HONOR BRIGHT

HONOR BRIGHT

THE penning of these lines is the last straightforward action in a career henceforth to be devoted to treachery and the pursuits of guile. From this day out, whosoever parketh his trust in me maketh the mistake of his life.

As a child I was the soul of honor. Nay, more. I was, if I may be allowed the expression, honor's very liver and lights. Without me, honor would have walked a disemboweled shade.

I was one of those *teacher-teacher-I-know* and *please-let-me-wash-the-blackboard-for-you* children. My mouth watered after knowledge, and my tongue itched with truth. Never, never did I carry on whispered conversations behind my teacher's back, or suck pickled limes in the shelter of my lifted desk-cover, or draw little pictures of the superintendent's funny ears. Not once during all my school-days did I

make notes on my handkerchief or the palm of my hand, to help me through a stiff examination; and you might have left the Desk-Copy on my desk all day—though I flunked out of sight, I would not have availed me of the answers in the back thereof. At Sunday-school not only was I able unfailingly to repeat the Golden-Text of the day, but I could invariably, and invariably did, discuss it with reference to the text of the Sunday before; the Beatitudes and the Ten Commandments were to my tongue as the street and number of my house; and never for one impious moment did it slip my mind that James and John were the sons of Zebedee.

I was that unpleasant, smug and righteous child who always lives next door to other people's children, a glittering example to them, the burdock in their panties and the gum in their hair.

You get it. You know what I mean. You remember me.

Yet in spite of my many offensivenesses, I was in one respect a favorite of all my companions,—I was an incomparable confidante. No matter what you might have done, even though your action were one of which I must

essentially disapprove, yet might you be sure beyond the shadow of anxiety that, once told, I would remain forever silent. And to this day my mind is dusty with the half-forgotten confidences of dimly remembered boys and girls, confidences long since, doubtless, brought to light and laid bare before the community, but through no agency of mine.

Well, as the twig was bent, etc., etc. Except that in my case the twig was not bent, and the tree shot up at an uncompromising right angle with the earth on which it fed, and would not have inclined on a bet.

Things went from good to better. My college days were saccharine with filial submission and glutinous with social zeal. I was treasurer of all the societies for the promotion of, the prevention of, and the benefit of. But the iniquitous indoor racing-club knew me not. And at the end of my junior year that little golden key which is the chaste reward of the retentive and Methodist mind, just flew to my watch-chain as to a magnet and clung there.

In the course of my four halcyon years at North——, I contracted, in addition to a

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truly painful cardiac expansion towards the student body as a whole, three shining and astral friendships, which were to accompany me through life even to the *porte cochère* of death, and beyond, if it could possibly be managed. I refer to Frances, Babbie, and Anne.

We told each other everything. That is to say, they told me everything. I, without either wishing to do so or feeling that I was so doing, kept back from them much of myself. The good confidante is, by the very nature of the thing, a bad confider.

The summer after commencement we spent together, at Anne's mother's camp in the Adirondacks. You know the kind of camp—bare planks and six bath-rooms; rough logs and six servants; wasps in the sugar-bowl; wildcats in the garbage-can; and motor-boats in which you wear your gloves and veil.

It was there that we met the boys from the island, Goddard and Blaine, who were to play so great a part in the lives of my three friends, and indirectly to be the cause of my abjuring honor and loyalty forever. They were both too attractive for words, I could see that for myself with half an eye, which was precisely the fraction of an eye I was devoting to the male

sex that summer. It might briefly be said of them that of the two Goddard had the looks and Blaine the money; though Goddard was far from being a pauper, having a sweet little car of his own and lots of things besides, and Blaine was not difficult at all to rest the eyes on.

Well, at the end of a month Blaine and Babbie were engaged; Goddard was keeping Anne out in his Stutz evening after evening until so late it was early; and Frances was weeping herself to sleep every night into a volume of Rupert Brooke.

As usual, we began by telling each other everything. But as usual I, having the least to tell, made the best listener. And little by little there crept a different note into the monologues poured hot into my ear. "Don't for heaven's sake let on to Babbie and Frances," Anne would say; and Frances, "Don't for the life of you mention it to Babbie"; and Babbie, "Now don't you ever breathe a word of this to a living soul." Blaine—for at the end of six weeks the pasts and presents of both young men had been opened like a book before me—Blaine would customarily bring his confessions

to a close by remarking, "Of course I wouldn't have Babbie get wind of this for the world, or Frances, either, for that matter."

Amid such a complexity of prohibitions my safest course seemed to me to be, by no means to tell anybody anything about anything. This course I followed so scrupulously that not once during the entire summer, by speech or by silence, by gesture or by my manner generally, did I convey to any one of my five confiders one hint of what was in the mind of any of the other four.

At the beginning of September this was the situation at the camp, put together by me out of numberless private interviews with the five, and known to no one but myself:

Babbie was engaged to Blaine, but she did not love him. She felt somehow that she had tricked him into proposing to her, but now that he had done it she was going to hold him to it, because he was the only man in her acquaintance who had mints of money, and she was determined to marry money or die. (I was not to let a word of this pass my lips.)

Blaine was engaged to Babbie, but he did not love her. He had discovered too late that it was Frances whom he loved, and he was

sticking to Babbie only because he hoped he was a gentleman, and because the poor little thing loved him so. If he thought for a moment she didn't love him with all her heart, or had a ray of hope that Frances ever would care for him, he would break his engagement at once, but he was afraid there was no chance either way. Blaine did *not* have mints of money, his father having shamefully squandered every penny of his mother's fortune, a fact not generally known, and which must at any cost be kept covered, for his mother's sake, until he, Blaine, should have had time to make good. (He could depend upon me, he knew, to be as silent as the grave about the whole rotten business.)

Frances was crying her eyes out in a hopeless passion for Blaine, whom she loved not for his money but for himself. If she had the slightest suspicion that he and Babbie were not completely wrapped up in each other and perfectly happy together, she would take a rose between her teeth and come skating into the picnic on one wheel. But alas, it was only too evident that Blaine worshipped the ground Babbie walked on, and that Babbie would die for Blaine without a moment's hesitation, in short,

that they were absolutely made for each other. So that was that. And there was nothing to do but smile and keep out of the way. (Naturally, all this was told me in the strictest confidence.)

As for Anne, she was so mad about Goddard that every other man in the world looked like her grandmother to her. But Goddard was spoiled; women were always making fools of themselves over him; and she knew that her only chance of keeping him interested in her at all was to pretend that she didn't care a snap about him. (She relied on me to keep her secret.)

As for Goddard, he adored Anne, and didn't give a hang who knew it.

On the twentieth of September Goddard came to me and announced, having first exacted from me a promise of adamantine silence, that he was leaving for New York on the midnight train. It was on account of Anne. He adored her, she was the only woman he had ever loved, if he thought she cared for him the least little bit he would be the happiest man in the world, but she didn't, she hated the sight of him, she treated him like the dirt under her feet, and he couldn't stick it any

longer. So he was departing for New York on the midnight train, and leaving no address.

That same afternoon Frances sought me out and announced with tears, having first extracted from me a vow of unoscillating taciturnity, that she was leaving for New York on the midnight train. It was on account of Blaine. She couldn't stick it any longer. If she stayed there another day she would do one of two things, she didn't know which; she would either vamp him shamelessly and distressingly in the sight of all present, or she would drag him into the boathouse, throw herself at his thin and elegant feet, and confess all. So she was departing for New York on the midnight train, and leaving no address.

Well, I might as well have been bound hand and foot as gagged the way I was. I did the only thing I could do, as it seemed to me. I went to each of the five in turn, and begged that my promise might be given me back, and my lips unsealed. But each of them insisted on first knowing why, and I couldn't tell why, so each of them held me stoutly to my word.

Goddard and Frances fled together on the midnight train. And the next thing I knew

they were living together in New York. I found this out merely by accident, and said nothing about it, and it didn't last long.

Babbie and Blaine were married.

Anne was whisked off to Europe by her mother.

That was two years ago. Babbie has recently been granted her divorce and is running down and rapidly overtaking the richest bachelor in Larchmont. Blaine at last is free to marry Frances, but instead of doing so, having by some mischance got wind of the little episode of Goddard, has just left for Tahiti. Frances is doing settlement work in Hester Street. Some time ago Anne and Goddard made it up, and were on the eve of getting married, when Goddard like a fool up and made a clean breast about Frances, and short-circuited the whole show. Anne is at present teaching botany in a girls' school in Peoria; and Goddard is killing himself as fast as he can, decently.

In all their misery they have one common balm. They can blame me for everything. And they do. They have got together in groups of two, three, four, and five, and plentifully

blamed me for everything. And none of them will speak to me.

I am through. I shall never keep anything to myself again. I am going to tell everything I know. Honor is all right in its place, but its place is among thieves.

I have on hand, gentle reader, a large assortment of confidences, of all sizes, varieties, shades, shapes and odors. I know something about everybody, and everything about thousands.

If you want to know the real reason why Mrs. K—— did *not* come home that night, or why Mr. D. was shot dead last March in the editorial office of the *Evening Moon*, just write to me. All communications will receive an eager and instant response.

OUR ALL-AMERICAN ALMANAC AND PROPHETIC MESSENGER

OUR ALL-AMERICAN ALMANAC AND PROPHETIC MESSENGER

January Hath XXXI Days (Planetary Aspects, Remarkable Days, Etc.)

1. New Year's Day, 1925. Cabarets closed, New York City; dancing abolished. Many private houses raided. Sale of crêpe paper and colored balloons prohibited. Two men surprised in Central Park with pockets full of confetti; and given sixty days each. Slogan Happy New Year changed by Act of Congress to Virtuous New Year. Thousands of post-cards held up in the mails.
Cigarettes banned, 1926.
Mars in the house of Venus. Saturn in the House of Representatives. Mercury in the descendant. The hand of beneficent reform will make itself felt in this country. Avoid females. Ask favors of elderly people.

Anti-Tobacco Bill passed, 1926. Tremendous rise in prices of cabbages, dried leaves, horse-hair, corn-silk and pond-lily-stems.

Partial eclipse of the sun. Mercury still going down.

7. Old Christmas Day. Santa Claus excommunicated by Society for Suppression of Imagination in Children, 1932. Any allusion, either public or private, to this fictitious and misleading character prohibited under heavy penalty.

All volumes of the untruthful adventures of (a) Alice in Wonderland, (b) Jack and the Beanstalk, (c) Little Red Riding-Hood, and (d) Cinderella, together with (e) the questionable episode of the Babes in the Wood; as well as the highly improbable tales of Hans Christian Andersen, and the senseless rhymes of Mary Vergoose: banned by S. S. I. C., removed from Public Libraries, and burned by Public Executioner in Central Park, 1933. Whipping-posts set up on Riverside Drive; stocks in Wall Street.

Croquet, tiddledy-winks, and kindred games of chance abolished, 1934.

Mercury invisible. Saturn in the house of Mirth. An unfortunate day.

April Hath XXX Days

1. All Fool's Day. Anthony Comstock canonized, 1925.
Proclaimed patron saint of America, 1926.
Famous speech of Senator Lovejoy to Congress, 1927: "Ladies and gentlemen: though a woman speak with the tongues of men and of senators, and have not modesty, she has become as sounding zimbarimbaphones and tinkling tomato-cans! How many a meek and retiring woman, a contented and home-loving wife, the proud mother of fourteen bouncing little darlings, seldom setting foot outside her own cheerful and immaculate kitchen, once having lost her modesty, has not developed into a Cleopatra, a Sappho, a Helen of Troy! Beware, ladies, beware lest such a fate await one of you! Ladies and gentlemen, I have given my life, the lives of my wife and children, the sweat of my neighbor's brow, and over

three of my father's hard-earned millions, in the holy cause of Female Modesty! A law requiring women to wear high-necked evening-gowns and ankle-length bathing-suits must be incorporated into the Constitution of this country, or civilization is at an end! It has repeatedly been brought to my attention that thousands of people, people in my very door-yard, so to speak, for lack of the funds necessary for further research, are dying in agony every year of cancer! . . . But, ladies and gentlemen, true to my principle, I have invariably replied, 'What's a little cancer in comparison to loss of modesty?' "

Festival of St. Anthony, 1929. Four thousand men and women storm Metropolitan Museum, destroying most of the paintings and all the statuary.

Sale and consumption of tea and coffee prohibited, 1930.

William Jennings Bryan proclaimed emperor, 1943.

The position of Billy Sunday in the house of Jupiter points to much agitation among the heavenly bodies, and forbodes evil for

theatres cnd places of amusement. The death of many prominent people is indicated, even Royalty may not escape.

7. Old-Lady Day. Music abolished, as being exciting to the lower instincts, 1935. Metropolitan Opera House and Carnegie Hall given over as picnicing-grounds to the Vicars' Anti-Art League and the Society for the Restoration of Side-Saddles for Women.

Ducking-stool for scolds installed on Boston Common, 1938.

Bill passed forbidding women to cut their hair even in case of fever, 1939.

Circulation of *The Tail of a Comet*, by Harold Bell Wright, suppressed, 1940. Subsequently brought out under the title, *The Caudal Appendage of a Comet.* All books by Gene Stratton-Porter banned and removed from Pubic Libraries, as laying unnecessary stress on the lamentable processes of reproduction among plants and animals, 1941.

Venus invisible. Carrie Nation in Cassiopœia's Chair. Do not court, marry, or ask favors.

11. Low Sunday. 25th Amendment, enforcing compulsory attendance at divine service on a minimum of fifty-two Sundays per annum, for a period of not less than eleven nor more than twenty-four hours per diem, adopted by Congress, 1943. Philadelphia leads country in re-establishing Curfew, 1946. Any person or persons discovered abroad after the ringing of the Liberty Bell at 8:00 P. M., will be apprehended and confined in the pillory in Independence Square, during the period of the Emperor's pleasure.
Mercury invisible. Uranus refuses to rise before sunset. A very doubtful day.

July Hath XXXI Days

Independence Day, 1776. Last Bacardi cocktail served in Brevoort grill, 1919. Unprecedented soaring in prices of soothing-syrup, lemon-extract, denatured alcohol, Sloane's Liniment and shoe-polish.
Over seven thousand illicit stills seized and confiscated, 1920.
Flag at half-mast on Internal Revenue Building, 1923.

Population of New York City, 23,000; 1925 census.

The conjunction of Neptune and Aquarius in the house of Bacchus has a threatening aspect as regards grain-crops, and the total eclipse of the Moon points to affliction in the Customs House. The Luminaries being just below the horizon in Square to Saturn threaten an early frost. Sell before noon, travel and remove.

13. Card-playing abolished, 1925.

Theatres closed, 1941.

Co-educational schools for all ages abolished, 1943.

Literature abolished, and all appurtenances thereto, including printing-presses, book-binderies, and pen-, ink-, and paper-plants confiscated by government and destroyed. Any person caught writing, reading, selling, buying, lending or borrowing A Book, liable to three years' penal servitude.

Motion before the House to do away with Summer, as being heating to the blood and inciting to venery, 1949.

Carried, 1950.

The unfortunate aspect of Apollo in the

eclipse of Times Square, promises a dull season. The child born on this day will be steady and persevering and lead an uneventful life.

September Hath XXX Days

1. Labor Day. Twenty-eighth Amendment, requiring that every woman shall marry at or previous to the age of eighteen, and give birth to no less than sixteen children, two of which shall be more or less crippled, and one of which either (a) deaf-mute, (b) epileptic, or (c) imbecile, adopted by Congress, 1950.

All motion-picture houses closed and paraphernalia taken over by Society for the Suppression of Youth among the Young, 1948.

Baseball goes, 1952.

Gemini in the ascendant. Total eclipse of the Sun. Avoid females.

6. A little band of smug and stiff-necked Puritans, including Miles Standish, John Alden, Priscilla Mullens, John Carver and William Brewster, spurning the indulgent arms of the generous, tolerant, broad-minded and sympathetic King

James I, sailed from Plymouth, England, on the good ship *Mayflower*, bound for the New World,—their slogan: FREEDOM TO WORSHIP GOD! (1620). A little band of nervous and repressed, but liberty-loving, men and women, including John Standish, Priscilla Carver, William Alden, Mary Mullens, and John Brewster, fleeing from the tyranny and despotism of the only absolute monarchy on the face of the globe, sail from Plymouth, New England, in the good ship *Cornflower* bound for the Old World, —their slogan: FREEDOM TO WORSHIP MAMMON! (1952).
(Note: Paris Observatory, Dec. 31, 1953. Total eclipse of the Western Hemisphere.)

THE IMPLACABLE APHRODITE

THE IMPLACABLE APHRODITE

Scene: *A studied studio, in which nine o'clock tea and things are being served by Miss Black, a graceful sculptress, to Mr. White, a man of parts, but badly assembled. Miss Black is tattooed with batik; Mr. White is as impeccably attired for the evening as a professional violinist.*

He: My dear Miss Black, you are, if you will permit me to say so, the most interesting unmarried woman of my acquaintance.

She (*languidly flicking an ash from a cigarette-holder the approximate length of a fencing-foil*): Oh, yes?

He: Yes. You are the only unmarried woman I know with whom I find it possible to talk freely on any subject. (*He clears his throat.*)

She (*gazing at him with clear, straightforward eyes*): You interest me. (*She waits for him to continue.*)

He (*continuing*): You have such an intrepid mind, I feel, so unblenched a vision. The petty concerns that make up the lives of other people, they are not your life. You see beyond their little disputes, their little aspirations, their little loves, into a world, a cosmos, where men and women can understand each other, can help each other, where the barriers of sex are like a mist in the air, dissipated with the dawn.

She (*cosmically*): It is true that for me there are no barriers.

He (*almost with excitement*): I know that! I know that! And that is how I know that you mean what you say—for the very simple reason that you are not afraid to say what you mean—and that at this moment, for example, as you sit there, so beautiful, so more than beautiful, and so all unconscious of your beauty, talking to me like a soul detached, a soul freed of the earth,—you are not all the time considering just how long it will take you to get me to propose to you! (*She starts and blushes a little, but he goes on without noticing.*) Oh, if you only knew what a relief you are, what a rest!—a woman who is not married, who has never been married, and who

does not insist that I marry her. Please do not think me boastful. It is not that I am so very attractive. I dare say it is the experience of every eligible man. And doubtless when they have had a good look at me, they decide against me. But unmarried women always give me the uncomfortable feeling that they are looking me over; and I object to being looked over, with matrimony a forethought.

She (*sympathetically*): I know. But I am sorry for them. They have nothing else with which to occupy their minds. That I am different from these women is through no virtue of my own, but only because I am blessed with a talent which releases my spirit into other channels. Whether the talent be great or small (*she deprecates gracefully toward the clutter of statuary about the studio*) is of no consequence. It is sufficient to ease my need.

He (*following the direction of her gesture, and considering the reclining figure of a nymph on a table beside him*): What a charming study! Such subtle lines, such exquisite proportions. Who is she?

She: I call her Daphne. She was running, you see,—and has fallen.

He: Oh. But I mean to say, who is your

model? You are fortunate to have found a creature at once so delicate and so roundly contoured.

She: Oh.

(*There is an appreciable pause.*)

She (*frankly*): Why, you see, I *have* no model. They are so difficult to get, and they are mostly so bad. I—am my own model. You notice the two long mirrors?—I place the stand between them, and work from my reflections.

(*There is an appreciable pause.*)

He (*pulling down his coat-sleeves over his cuffs, and adjusting his tie*): What an interesting idea.

She (*laughing gaily*): Yes—and so economical!

(*She rises and lights the alcohol lamp under a small brass tea-kettle. Her heavy, loose robe clings to her supple limbs. The flame sputters. With an impatient exclamation she drops to her knees and considers the lamp from beneath, with critical attention. The sleeves fall back from her lifted arms; her fine brows scowl a little; her vermilion lips are pouted in concentration.*)

He (*with ponderous lightness*): Miss Black,

I dare say that to many of my sex you are a dangerously attractive woman.

She (*rising sinuously, and dusting her hands, which seem to caress each other*): Well,—yes. In fact (*smiling faintly*), you are the only man in my acquaintance, unmarried or married, who does not importune me with undesirable attentions.

He (*with aesthetic ferocity*): Of course. I know how it is. They don't see you as I do. They do not desire to leave you free, as I do. They don't know what you are. It is your beauty which attracts them, your extraordinary grace, your voice, so thrillingly quiet, your ravishing gestures. They don't see you as I do. (*He is silent, breathing hard.*)

She (*in a burst of confidence*): It is true. I don't know what it is about me, but I am besieged by suitors. I have not a moment to myself. All day long, all day long, the bell rings; I open the door; they drop on their knees; I tell them not to be absurd; they insist upon giving me their hearts; I insist that I have no room for anything more in my apartment! they arise, dust their trousers, curse my beauty, gulp, yank open the door,—and the bell rings. You alone, of them all, see me as

I am. You know that I am not beautiful, you are undisturbed by my proximity, it is possible for me to talk with you, as—as one star talks to another. (*She leans back wearily and closes her eyes, exposing a long and treacherous throat, full of memories.*)

He (*a little uncertainly*): Well—I—it is true that I—er—admire you for your true worth, that I really appreciate you, and that your external attributes have nothing to do with that appreciation. But it would be impossible for any man, who could be called a man, to be blind to your incredible charm, your inscrutable, unconscious fascination. For I know it is unconscious,—you are lovely as a flower is lovely, without effort. I am aware of all this, although, as you say, I am unmoved by it.

(*She turns her head slowly, and opens upon him a pair of wondering, topaz eyes. He swallows audibly, but meets the look without flinching.*)

He (*stoutly*): What does move me, and to what extent you cannot possibly imagine (*he shifts convulsively in his chair*), is your unparalleled genius, the poise and vigour of your

work. I want you to go on—to grow—to grow—and to be free!

She (*tensely*): I *must* be free. I must.

He: I know. And if there is anything I can do to make you freer—

She: I know. I know. (*Selecting a cigarette from the lacquer tray at her elbow, she thoughtfully twists it into her cigarette-holder.*) I am sorry that you think me beautiful. But I suppose it cannot be helped. (*She sighs.*) You must forgive me, but I am always a little sorry when a man becomes even conscious of me as a woman. Nothing may come of it, of course,—in this instance, I am sure, nothing will— (*She flashes at him a little candid smile.*) But there is always the danger, for we are, among other things, human beings, and—oh, I am troubled that you said that! (*She twists her long hands; her jade rings click together.*)

He (*sitting forward on his chair and taking her restless fingers firmly in his trembling hands*): Have no fear of me. Believe me, if it came to that, I should go. You should never guess. Rather than hurt you, I should go. I should get up and go, suddenly, without even saying good-bye, and you would never guess.

She (*smiling a little lonely smile*): I know. I know you would. You are like that.

He (*intensely*): I would do anything rather than hurt you in the slightest degree,—so high do I rate your talent.

She: I know. (*She leans back her head and closes her eyes.*) It is good to feel that I have your friendship. I have so little—friendship.

He (*thickly, staring at her pained and perfect mouth*): You will have my friendship always, as long as you want it. And even when you tire of me, and don't want it any more, you will still have it. Remember that. Woman though you are, you stir me more deeply by your genius than ever a man has done. (*He bows his head on her hands.*)

She (*looking thoughtfully down at the top of his head*): You are so kind, so kind to be distressed for my sake. Please don't be distressed. Come let's have our tea. I am really all right, you know. It's just that, at times, I am a little sad.

He (*lifting his head and looking into her sad eyes*): Yes, you are sad. And I am sad, too. How curious that we should both be sad!

If only I could do something to comfort you. Please don't look like that.

She (*with a gay smile that is obviously a little forced*): Very well! There now!—I am quite happy again, you see! Come, let's have our tea.

(*He sits back in his chair, and looks curiously at the arms of it, feeling that he has been away a long time. She busies herself with the tea things.*)

She (*after a moment, peering into the black and silver Chinese tea-pot*): Do you know, it's extraordinary, the way I feel about tea: I have to have it. It's the one thing I couldn't possibly get along without. Money, clothes, books, mirrors, friends—all these I could dispense with. But tea,—I have to have it. Fortunately, its connotation, as being the accomplice of spinsterhood, is not so offensive to me as it is to most women. If it will help me to remain a spinster, then it is my staunchest ally! (*She laughs gaily.*)

He (*wincing, but recovering himself*): I'm just that way about my pipe. (*Suddenly remembering his pipe, he gropes for it pitifully, as for the hand of a comrade in the dark. But it occurs to him that she probably objects to*

pipe-smoke. He withdraws his hand from his pocket, sighing.)

She (*without looking up*): Why don't you smoke your pipe?

He (*incredulously*): Wouldn't it annoy you?

She: Heavens, no!

(*He draws his pipe from his pocket and fills it, gratefully, meanwhile watching her. She is cruelly slicing a lemon, by means of a small dagger with which a Castilian nun has slain three matadors; it strikes him that she looks gentle and domestic. A great peace steals over him.*)

He (*contentedly*): What a pleasant room this is.

She (*delicately poising in her hand a sugar-tongs made from the hind claws of a baby gila-monster, and glancing lovingly about the room*): Yes. It breaks my heart that I have to leave it. Two lumps, or three?

He: Have to leave it? Er—no, thanks, I don't like tea—well, three lumps—have to *leave* it? (*He grasps his cup and saucer and holds them before him, as if they were an unfamiliar pair of infant twins.*)

She: Yes. You see (*conversationally*), I'm sailing for Europe on the fifteenth, and—

He (*hoarsely*): Fifteenth of what? (*His cup and saucer rattle together now like a pair of dice.*)

She (*pleasantly*): Fifteenth of this month. It will be of infinite value to me in my work, I am sure,— and I think only of that. Yet I hate to leave these rooms. I've been here—

He: Don't—don't—don't talk—be quiet—Oh, God—let me think! (*With awful care he deposits his cup and saucer on the table at his elbow. She watches him intently.*)

He (*suddenly sliding from his chair to the floor and kneeling before her*): But what about me? What about me?

She (*coldly*): I don't understand you.

He: You say you're going because it will help your work,—but think of me! What will happen to me?

She: I'm sure I don't know. It hadn't occurred to me to consider.

He (*shouting*): No! Of course not! Oh, you're cold, you are—and cruel, my God! Your work! (*He laughs scornfully.*) All you think about is those damn little putty figures!

And here am I, flesh and blood,—and what do you care?

She (*icily*): Less and less.

He (*groaning*): And you can say that—and me loving you the way I do! You don't mean it! Oh, if you'd only marry me, I'd make you care. I'd make you so happy!

She (*with revulsion*): Oh, really,—I must *ask* you—

He: I don't care how much you work—work your head off! A man's wife *ought* to have some little thing to take up her time. But as for—oh, Lord—(*He buries his face in the folds of her gown.*) *What* am I going to do?

(*She has no suggestion to offer.*)

He (*abruptly rising and glaring down at her*): Do you know what I think?—I think you're enjoying this! I think it's the breath of life to you!

She (*earnestly*): No, really. I assure you—I am frightfully distressed—I had no idea you felt like this—I—

He (*wildly*): You're a lying woman!

She (*rising, white with the fury of the righteous unjustly accused*): Will you be so good as to go?

He (*laughing boisterously, then in a sub-*

dued and hopeless voice): Very well. Of course I'll go if you want me to. But my heart I leave here.

She (*languidly*): Pray don't. I have room for nothing more in the apartment.

(*With a growl he yanks open the door and leaps forth, slamming it behind him. She goes to the table and pours herself a cup of cold tea.*)

She (*after a moment of silence, running her jaded fingers through her hair*): Oh, dear, I *wish* I were not so restless!

Curtain

THE SAME BOAT

THE SAME BOAT

Evening of the First-Day-Out
(On Deck)

He (*throwing his arms around somebody*): Oh, I beg your pardon!

She (*extricating herself from somebody's arms*): Oh, I'm sorry!

(*She wears an enthralling mist-grey suit and a dull-gold turban*)

He (*courteously*): I hope I didn't hurt you.

She (*courteously*): Not at all, thank you. And if you had, (*she looks hurriedly around, and then leans forward, as if about to betray a confidence*) and if you had, 'twould be my own fault. I'm walking the wrong way!

He (*enchanted*): Indeed! And how do you know which is the right way?

She (*ingenuously, gazing up at him*): Why, I supposed it was the way everybody is walking!

He (*sinisterly, gazing down at her*): A perilous assumption!

SHE: I hope I didn't hurt *you!* (*She reaches out an impulsive hand, and withdraws it flutteringly.*)

HE: Oh, no! Er—on the contrary!

SHE (*gaily*): I'll try not to run into you again. Goodnight!

HE (*reluctantly*): Oh,—goodnight.

(*She walks away. He stares after her.*)

Morning of the Second-Day-Out
(*On Deck*)

HE (*to himself, just having passed for the twenty-fourth time the steamer-chair in which she sits, reading, in a peacock-blue feather toque and a lot of little heliotrope ruffles*): Hateful girl! Wouldn't look up if I dropped dead at her feet!

SHE (*for the twenty-fourth time looking up and following him with her brown eyes furtively*): Oh, dear! He certainly is wonderful-looking! (*She sighs*) How marvellously he walks! (*She sighs*) And what a heavenly overcoat!—I think I'll go in and write some letters. (*She hurriedly unwinds her feet from the rug and disappears.*)

Evening of the Second-Day-Out
(On Deck)

HE (*courteously, stopping by her chair*): Won't you let me do that?

SHE (*courteously, struggling with her rug*): Oh,—thank you, don't trouble. Oh, that's very nice. Thank you very much.

HE (*lingering*): Not at all. I—are you sure that one blanket is enough for you? It seems awfully light. I have one I'm not using at all if you——

SHE (*hurriedly*): Oh, no, please,—it's quite all right, thank you. (*She smiles at him huntedly, Slavically; she is wearing a restrained black hat and a black cloth dress with a savagely high collar*) Thank you. (*He knows himself dismissed.*)

Morning of the Third-Day-Out
(On Deck)

HE (*turning from the rail to speak to her as she passes*): Goodmorning!

SHE (*courteously, continuing her walk*): Goodmorning!

HE: Don't you want to see the great big fishes?

SHE (*with a small, very cultivated squeal*): Oh, yes! Where are they? (*She comes over to the rail. She is wearing a short moleskin coat and a moleskin tam-o'shanter with a little red silk apple on the side.*)

SHE: Why, they're playing, aren't they? Oh, how adorable! (*She starts to clap her hands, stops in confusion, darts at him a swift, beseeching glance, and stares at the sea. They watch for some moments in silence,—that is to say, she watches the great big fishes, and he watches her watch them. She knows that he is watching her; and he knows that she knows it. Still, they have their simplicity, in a way.*)

SHE (*catching her under-lip between her teeth*): Oh, dear, I'm afraid they're gone! (*She stares at him imploringly. He is helpless. He can think of nothing to do to bring them back but to put salt on their tails, which seems vaguely incongruous.*)

SHE: Well,—(*she sighs, then smiles brightly*) Thank you *so* much for showing them to me!

HE (*eagerly*): Wait a moment! If you're going to walk, I'll take a few turns with you,—if you don't mind.

SHE (*hurriedly, twisting her hands to-*

gether): Why, I—I was just going in. I'm sorry. (*She smiles at him swiftly, deprecatingly, and is gone.*)

He (*tramping the deck, moodily*): Dammit, what's the idea?—running away like that all the time!

She (*hurrying down to her cabin*): Oh, dear, *why* do I run away like that all the time? —Nobody else would!

Evening of the Third-Day-Out
(*On Deck*)

(*It is nearly eleven o'clock, cold and very windy. Most of the passengers who are not in their cabins are in the smoker. The canvas set to keep the wind from the sides of the promenade-deck keeps also the deck-lights from shining upon the bow. In the bleak darkness of this forward-deck, wrapped well against the cold, but buffeted breathless by the wind, stands Jacqueline, clinging to the rail, and staring out at the night. She is wearing a very swagger purple leather coat, and a little leather hat.*)

He (*suddenly beside her*): Tell me,—why do you avoid me like this?

SHE (*quietly*): I do not avoid you. How silly!

HE (*coolly*): Oh, yes, you do. If you hadn't been avoiding me, you couldn't have escaped being with me,—that's easy. I follow you about like a pup.

SHE (*abruptly turning her head and speaking over his shoulder, in a teased voice*): Yes, —and why do you? Why do you wish to annoy me? (*Her chin quivers. She presses the back of her hand against her mouth and turns as abruptly away.*)

HE (*hurt and shocked beyond measure*): Good heavens,—why, I wouldn't annoy you for anything in the world! I—I just wanted to be with you. I'm lonesome as the devil, and this boat drives me crazy, that's all. Child!—You're not crying?

SHE (*tearfully, restraining her skirt, which blows in the wind and insists upon caressing his legs*): Certainly, I'm crying. But don't —don't trouble, please! It's a form of dissipation! (*She sobs involuntarily*) Please go away!

HE: I shall do nothing of the sort. (*He lays his hand on her shoulder*) You're lonely, aren't you?

SHE (*drying her eyes and looking up at him, quaveringly*): No—no, I'm just nervous!

Evening of the Fourth-Day-Out
(*In the Smoker*)

HE: Do you mind smoking these? They're about all you can get.

SHE: Thank you,—I don't smoke.

(*Her head is turned slightly from him. She is wearing a black velvet dress with a modest neck and no sleeves at all, and a very thin scarlet hat that droops to her shoulders. He gazes upon her. She is so beautiful that she makes virtue attractive.*)

SHE (*lifting her head and watching the smoke about the ceiling of the room,—she has a very pretty chin*): It's nice in here, isn't it? You almost forget you're on a boat. It's more like a café.

HE: Yes.

SHE (*warmly, clasping her hands*): It's really *awfully* nice!

HE: It is. And you're the only nice person in it.

SHE (*with certainty*): Oh, no!

HE: It's the truth. You are. Have you looked around?

SHE (*smiling faintly, looking into his eyes*): I can tell without looking around that I'm not the only nice person in it.

Evening of the Fifth-Day-Out
(*In the Smoker*)

HE: You haven't told me your name yet.

SHE (*as if in fright, putting her hand to her cheek*): Oh, please don't!

(*They are sitting at a small round table. At her words several men look up from their five-days' poker-game.*)

SHE (*in a low voice, glancing hurriedly around, then leaning towards him*): I'm sorry. I didn't mean to speak so loud. But I wish you wouldn't ask me that. It's so much nicer not knowing who we are. (*She smiles into his eyes, waveringly. She is wearing a simple little green frock such as the Lorelei would pawn her comb for, and a large hat of rainy black and silver. He gazes at her for some time, then turns away sharply and drums on the table for a moment with his fingers.*)

HE (*ceasing to drum on the table*): Beg

your pardon. Nasty habit. Nervous, I guess. Er—just as you say, dear child. And perhaps you're right. What will you drink? (*While the drinks are being brought, he covers his eyes with his hand.*)

Evening of the Sixth-Day-Out
(*On Deck*)

HE: Do you like it when it rains like this?

SHE: I love it!

(*She is wearing an adorable brown cloak that exactly matches her eyes, and a little felt hat with a long, curling orange quill.*)

HE: You'll get enough of it in Paris at this season. You're going to be there?

SHE: Only for a day or two. I'm going to Florence for a month.

HE: The devil you are!—I beg your pardon. I mean to say, so am I!

(*They are briskly walking up and down the deck together. The rain strikes at them as they come out from under the shelter of the roof, and the deck becomes more slippery.*)

HE (*taking her arm to steady her*): You are trembling! What is the matter, child?

SHE (*in a fainting voice*): I am cold.

HE (*stopping short, greatly concerned*): Shall we go in?

SHE (*confusedly*): I don't know—I'm not cold, really—that was a lie. I'm just trembling.

HE (*holding her tightly by the arm and bending down to look at her*): Why are you trembling?

SHE (*twisting her hands and staring up at him imploringly*): I don't know!

Evening of the Seventh-Day-Out
(*In the Dining-room*)

(*They are sitting at a table for two.*)

HE: It's much nicer eating together isn't it? Will you have some of this?

SHE: Er—no, thank you,—it might be anything by this time! I wish he'd take this soup before it leaps into my lap.

HE (*admiringly*): You haven't minded the motion at all, have you?

SHE: No,—not a bit. I *wish* he'd take this soup. This gown is a favourite of mine. (*She is wearing a dancing frock of coral crêpe meteor. Her throat aand shoulders are such that to think of food in her presence is like taking a*

shoe-box of sandwiches to the Rodin Museum.)

HE: It is perilously charming. It doesn't look as if it had ever been worn before. I don't think I ever knew a girl with so many clothes!

SHE (*turning ash-white and putting her hand to her throat*): Oh—Oh, don't!

HE (*frightened*): What's the matter?

SHE (*recovering herself*): Nothing. A—a queer little pain. It's gone now. You were saying—oh, yes. You see, they let me take my big wardrobe trunk right into my cabin with me. And then there's—there's a steamer-trunk besides. I wish he'd take this *soup!*

Evening of the Eighth-Day-Out
(*On Deck*)

HE: All those lights are light-houses on the English coast.

SHE: Oh.

HE: Yes. You won't see the French coast until morning.

SHE: Oh.

(*There is a long silence. She hugs about her a soft and voluminous dolman of seal and sand-coloured duvetyn. She is bare-headed. Her yellow hair blows on his face.*)

HE: Aren't you cold, dear?

SHE: Yes a little. You musn't call me that.

HE (*opening his heavenly overcoat and folding it about her with one arm*): You won't tell me your name.

SHE (*simply*): It is Jacqueline.

HE: Oh, how beautiful! I wish you hadn't told me.

SHE: What is your name?

HE: Terence.

SHE: Oh, may I call you Terry—just once?

HE: If you call me Terry I shall call you Love.

SHE: Oh, please,—we mustn't!

HE (*suddenly tightening his clasp about her*): Oh, Jacqueline!

SHE: Don't!

HE (*bending his face to hers*): Please—please.

SHE (*faintly*): Oh—I feel as if the boat were going down.

(*He takes her in his arms.*)

The Next Morning (*On Deck*)

HE (*abruptly appearing before her, in a low voice*): Jacqueline, listen. I have to go in

just a minute. I wish I could help you get off —but I can't.

SHE (*rather nervously*): It's all right. I'll be perfectly all right. (*She is wearing the mist-grey suit and dull-gold turban of the first day.*)

HE: Dear, are you sorry you let me kiss you last night?

SHE (*more and more distractedly*): Oh—I don't know! I don't know!

HE (*with tenderness*): Please don't be. It will always be one of the loveliest memories I have. And dear,—aren't you going to change your mind and let me see you in Florence?

SHE (*with a stifled scream*): No! No! I won't! I'm going to Florence on my honeymoon! I won't! I—

HE (*stepping back and staring at her*): Oh, my God—you, too?

(*Just at this moment a young woman comes up to them, looking rather white, clinging to the rail.*)

HE: Oh, hello, Madge! Feeling better, dear? My wife, Mrs. Dennison, Mrs.—er—

SHE (*very sweetly, holding out her hand*): I was so distressed that you were ill all the time, Mrs. Dennison.

(*Just at this moment a young man comes up to them, looking rather white, clinging to the rail.*)

SHE: Oh, hello, Dick! My husband, Mr. Littleton,—Mrs. Dennison, Mr. Dennison. Feeling better, dear?

CURTAIN

NO BIGGER THAN A MAN'S HAND

NO BIGGER THAN A MAN'S HAND

A Breakfast Table. Seated at one end of which Joey, luxuriously upholstered in striped mauve silk, quilted black satin and a pair of red leather lounging shoes. Seated at the other end of which Li'l' Elner, exquisitely hung with point-edged handkerchief linen, peacock-blue crêpe de Japon embroidered in festoons of wistaria and one-legged white birds, and a pair of high-heeled, black-satin mules with scream-pink linings. They have been married eight weeks. This little home is their little home.

HE: What is it, my angel?

SHE: Will Joey do something for Li'l' Elner?

HE: (*putting his hand to his ear*) I can't hear you, darling, you're sitting so far away.

SHE: (*with a stare of pretty astonishment*) Nonsense, sweetheart—of course you can hear me!

HE: Sorry, darling, can't hear a word you say. I'm afraid you'll have to come nearer.

SHE: (*blushing*) Oh. (*She rises and comes around the table. He draws her down to his knee.*)

HE: There now. All set. Dish the poison.

SHE: (*rubbing her head against his cheek*) Joey, do you love me?

HE: (*negatively*) Huh-uh.

SHE: (*alarmed*) You don't?

HE: No. That's not the word for it.

SHE: Oh. What *is* the word for it?

HE: Don't know. Isn't any word for it.

SHE: (*snuggling*) Is it just terrible, Joey?

HE: Yeah. (*He clears his throat.*) Honey, can you reach my cigarettes?—They're right there in that left-hand pocket. There's some matches there, too.

SHE: Here, darling. No, I'll light it for you. (*She lights it for him.*) I'm afraid I got the end all wet. Do you mind?

HE: Huh-uh. Prefer it that way. (*He tightens his arm around her.*) Now, what was it you wanted, sweetheart?

(*She is silent.*)

HE: What's wrong, dear?

SHE: (*in a troubled voice*) I can't bear to tell you.

HE: (*turning white*) Oh, my God!

SHE: Oh, no, it's nothing, Joey! It's just —(*She pauses.*)

HE: Well?

SHE: (*desperately*) I *wish* you wouldn't leave the cover off the tooth-paste tube!

HE: (*bursting into healthy laughter*) Oh, is *that* all?

SHE: (*dubiously*) Yes,—that's all.

HE: Why, I didn't know I—yes, that's right, I guess I do, too. Always gets hard at the end. Sort of comes-out-like-a-bullet-lies-flat-on-the-wall. Well, darling, I'll tell you what we'll do..

SHE: (*still more dubiously*) What?

HE: We'll each have his or her private and individual tube of tooth-paste. Though—it does seem a little like divorce. (*He puts his arm more closely about her.*)

SHE: Oh, that won't help any. It's the *sight* of it I can't understand, that's all, with the cover off. Won't you *please* remember to put it back on, Joey, darling—for me?

HE: Well I guess I'd be a pretty small part of a man if I wouldn't.

Scene II

A Breakfast Table. Seated at one end of which Joey, very newly shaven and brisk, in a faultless business suit, an irreproachable collar, and elegantly polished shoes the colour of new horse-chestnuts. Seated at the other end of which Li'l' Elner, suavely attired for shopping, in dark cloth and crisp little batiste ruffles, a platinum wrist-watch just visible to the naked eye, and the sour and dyspeptic countenance of a woman with something on her mind. They have been married eight months.

HE: (*genially*) Darned good coffee. Funny how few people know how to make good coffee.

(*She is silent.*)

HE: Kiki any better, dear? Hair still coming out?

SHE: (*coldly*) Yes. All over everything. He says she's getting on fine. But I don't see much difference.

HE: (*easily*) Oh. well—he probably knows his business.

SHE: (*coldly*) I don't see what makes you think so. A great many people don't know their business.

(*Pause.*)

HE: Seen anything of Audrey?

SHE: No.

HE: Funny girl, Audrey.

(*She is silent.*)

HE: Wonder if Bill's got back yet?

(*She is silent.*)

HE: Not very chatty this morning, are you?

(*She is silent.*)

HE: What's the matter?

SHE: Nothing.

HE: Got a headache?

SHE: No.

HE: Anything wrong?

(*She is silent.*)

HE: (*leaning across the table and reaching out his hand to her*) Hon, what's on your mind?

SHE: (*disregarding the hand*) Nothing

HE: Oh, yes, there is.

SHE: (*coldly*) Why, no, there isn't.

HE: (*withdrawing his hand and thrusting it in his pocket*) Well, all I can say is, you've got a peach of a grouch.

(*She is silent.*)

HE: Aw,—come on, hon—snap out of it.

SHE: (*evenly*) There's nothing the matter with me, Joseph. You're over sensitive.

HE: (*dumfounded, staring at her*) Sensitive? What's that got to do with it?

(*She is silent.*)

HE: (*rising*) Well, I can't stand this. I'm going to get out. You certainly know how to make it devilish disagreeable for a fellow, I'll say that much for you.

SHE: (*suddenly flashing out at him*) Well, why shouldn't I? You make it as disagreeable as you can for me!

HE: I—what? What have I done now?

SHE: It isn't what you've done now! It's what you've always done, if I didn't keep after you every minute! I can't *stand* it! It makes me *wild!* And you know it perfectly well! And you keep right on doing it!

HE: Doing *what?*

SHE: You know perfectly well!

HE: I'm cursed if I do!

SHE: Well, you ought to, if you don't! It just shows how little attention you pay!

HE: (*quietly, coming over to her and laying his hand on her shoulder*) See here, Elner. Pull yourself together. What is it I do, girl? Tell me.

SHE: (*bursting into tears and burying her face in his waistcoat*) Le-eave the cover off the tooth-paste tu-ube!

Scene III

A Bedroom. Li'l' Elner, négligée in sombre heliotrope and violet, is breakfasting in bed. Enter Joey, swathed in a Turkish-towelling bath-robe. They have been married eight years.

HE: (*loudly*) Where are my grey trousers?

SHE: (*in an agonized whisper, covering her face with her hands*) Put on your hat!

HE: *What?*

SHE: (*shuddering*) Your hat! Your hat! Put it on!

HE: Well, for— (*He goes out, and returns at once wearing a derby and carrying a walking stick.*) All right. This suit you?

SHE: (*with a stifled scream*) Close the door!

HE: Anything to oblige a lady. (*He closes the door.*) Now, maybe you'll answer my question.

SHE: They are at the tailor's.

HE: Where'd you dump the things that were in the pockets?

SHE: (*pointing*) In that drawer.

(*He goes to the drawer, opens it, paws about in it a moment, finds what he is looking for, and turns to leave the room.*)

SHE: (*with a wild shriek*) *Don't* leave that drawer open!

HE: Oh, for cat's sake! (*He closes the drawer, comes over to the bed, and stands looking at her.*) Nell, are you crazy?

SHE: (*quietly drinking her tea*) No. Not yet.

HE: (*uneasily*) Oh, come on, hon. No dramatics. You know you're as sane as I am.

SHE: (*quietly, laying down her cup*) Joe, I'm going to leave you.

HE: (*staggering backward and sitting down heavily on a chair*) Nell!

SHE: Yes. I am.

HE: (*mopping his brow*) Why?

SHE: I can't bear it any longer, and keep my reason. It's not that I don't love you. It's just that I can't stand the sight of you. You've got so you look like a—(*She stares at him, bursts into a hysterical howl and covers her face with her hands.*) like a tube of tooth-paste to me!

Scene IV

A Bathroom, some time later. Li'l' Elner has obtained her divorce, and has married again. Discovered stretched on the floor, the body of Li'l' Elner, in one hand, a smoking revolver, in the other a scrap of notepaper bearing the inscription: THIS IS TOO MUCH. *On the glass shelf above the washbowl a tube of tooth-paste, with the cover off.*

THE GREEK DANCE

THE GREEK DANCE

I am tired of the Greek Dance.

I am tired of seeing a group of respectable young women garbed in pastel shades of home-dyed cheese-cloth, limping discreetly about in reticent abandon, to the tune of something or other in three-four time. I am tired of the curved elbow, the limp wrist, the dangling hand, the lifted knee, the thrown-back head, the parted mouth, the inarticulate bust—restrained by a bath-robe cord—, the pointed finger of innocence leveled at the oppressor of Belgium, the look that registers horror, the look that registers woe, and the look that registers that spring is here.

I am tired of beholding three young things in their chemises, each with one raised hand loosely clasping the raised hands of the others and one leg floating in the air behind her, registering a basket of flowers.

I am tired of baby-blue, bassinet-pink, hope-chest - white, undefined - longing - lilac, sup-

pressed-desire-yellow, and maiden's-prayer-mauve.

I am tired of lyrical hop-scotch.

I am tired of feet. Feet are unpleasant. They are too flat. And there are too many toes on them.

Why is it that the girls of so many of our best families, the hope of our land, as you might say, insist upon getting all safety-pinned up into several yards of mosquito-netting and standing about on somebody's golf-links, while Arnold Genthe takes their photograph?

Of course, there is always youth. In spite of the zealous and unflagging efforts of earnest, middle-aged men harassed by dyspepsia, to wipe youth from the known world, youth still exists, in some localities, and has to be reckoned with. And the younger you are, the harder it is for you to stand still for any length of time. "C'est la jeunesse!"—as the taxi-drivers say in Paris.

But why always the Greek dance? Why not the Trojan dance, the Carthaginian dance, the dance of Upper Silesia? What about Rome? There must have been dancers there. Think of all the emperors they had. Where there is

an emperor there is sure to be at least one dancer. Whence comes this popular superstition that Greece was the only country ever possessing a one-two-three-glide?

Naturally, there are some sections, distressingly savage districts for the most part, whose dances, on the face of them, for our purposes, are out of the question. Take for example those simple races which, inhabiting zones much more tropical than ours, dispense entirely, whilst treading their ritualistic quadrilles, with the scarf, the veil, the artificial fig-leaf, which alone to our weak western eyes make beauty sufferable. Often, too, their terpsichorean pastimes involve a symbolism to us as incomprehensible as it is unattractive. And in the case of the Fiji Islanders, the Igorot head-hunters, and certain cannibalistic sea-coast tribes, the faithful conformance not only to the spirit but also to the letter of the dance, would obviously necessitate the not infrequent use of properties both ghastly and untidy.

There are other difficulties.

I can well understand why an attractive and delicately-nurtured débutante of fastidious personal habits might not very much wish to become an Ethiopian dancer. It would be super-

latively annoying, I should think, having to paint one's body all an extremely dull grey and make a hole in one's nose for a brass ring to go through. To say nothing of the difficulty one might have in persuading a shark to let one have his teeth. Nor would it be nice to have one's back slashed in intricate designs and dirt rubbed into the wounds in order to make the eventual scars more thrilling to the beholder. While to have one's entire surface tattooed in colors would be far too distracting to be practicable; one would never again have a leisure moment in which to contemplate the wall-paper. These aspects of the problem, while to the casual observer they may seem trivial enough, are, in fact, of an importance scarcely to be over-rated.

Then there are the Esquimaux. To be an Esquimaux dancer of good standing one would be obliged to develop such a tremendous muscle, in order to support the immense quantity of fur one would be required to wear. To do a Zephyr-Dance in the skins of six polar-bears would be rather like doing the Highland Fling while up to one's neck in quick-sand,—next to impossible. Frankly, there are phases

of this Esquimau problem that would dissuade one at the outset.

As for interpretive motion after the manner of the Chinese, this cannot fail to exact from the occidental amateur a certain amount of actual physical distress,—having one's feet folded up in some unfamiliar posture, or at least being obliged to stick up the corners of one's eyes with surgeons' tape.

I would suggest the English dance; but tact forbids. We have all seen the English at their dancing, in the Piccadilly Grill or at the Embassy Club, and most of us have remained seated with our feet tucked well under our chairs, while they were about it. For the Englishman fox-trots as he fox-hunts, with all his being, through thickets, through ditches, over hedges, through chiffons, through waiters, over saxophones, to the victorious finish; and who goes home depends on how many the ambulance will accommodate. An English butterfly-dance, it follows from the above, is not the dance of the English butterfly, as might be expected, but rather the dance of some retired member of the English clergy, splashing through an English frog-pond with a net in his hand. As I have

already hinted, it is with timidity that I would suggest the English dance.

As for the Scotch, I have already mentioned the Highland Fling. In more auspicious circumstances, it is not without its interest. But, on the whole, Scottish dancing is a little too much like Scottish speaking. If one can imagine a long freight-train, no two cars of which are coupled together or in any way connected, nevertheless proceeding, confident and vehement, to its destination, one has a fairly good idea of Scotch articulation. And this, as applied to dancing, would never be sufficiently sinuous to exercise a universal appeal.

Now at first thought it would seem that any young woman of ambition would wish to become a Russian dancer. The Russians wear such happy, inharmonious colors, and such gallant boots, and they can twist themselves around three times in the air, and everything. But it cannot be denied that at times they make a great deal of noise with their feet, and that they sometimes yell. It is not to be expected that a young woman of traditions would consent to appear in the afternoon before a mixed audience and make a noise with her feet,—and yell.

I dare say the native Irish dances, could one only recover them, would be for the most part inordinately charming and gay. But consider: supposing one lilted to some melody recently gone out of fashion, or reeled in a yellow curtain instead of in a green one, or in a green piano-cover instead of in a yellow one,—what awkward complications might there not result! The Irish are so excitable just now.

Greece, having been dead so long, is common property. The Greeks that are living today have not one whit more data on their ancient civilization than has everybody else. If, at this moment, I arise, take off my shoes and stockings, tie a candy-box ribbon about my hair, and do a Greek Dance, my boot-black may maintain until he died of apoplexy that it is no more a Greek dance than his hat is, yet he cannot quench me.

And, right here, let me pause to reflect.

Is it not possible, all things being possible, that the Greek Dance, as we sit through it, is not a Greek dance at all? Or at least that it is only one of several? Indeed, now that I think of it,—were there no youths in Greece? Or, if there were, were they all

crippled in some way? For one never sees them among their panting sisters, treading splinters, dropping roses, being Greek. Surely, there were runners, if not dancers, in the male youth of Attica and Sparta. Why, then, would they not excel in this Greek Dance, that is nine parts running and the rest leaping into the air?

Were there no lovers? No?

But yes. I have heard tales to the contrary. There was Dionysos. He would love to dance, if only somebody would ask him. But nobody does.

And now I know what is the matter with the Greek Dance, as served to you and me. There are too many unattended ladies at it. Women are always monotonous, in groups of more than one.

But stay—what about France? Nobody has mentioned France! Why not a French Dance? The French are graceful, happy, friendly, and free from the more objectionable barbarisms.

True. But, in concluding, let me state one fact, which is, more than any other three elements, responsible for the continued existence of the Greek Dance and for the primitive condition of motor-dramatic representation among other peoples. The French, along with all the

rest or us, suffer an incalculable disadvantage in not having had a great national musician to compose their dance-tunes for them. What Greece would have been without her Chopin, it is impossible to conjecture.

ART AND HOW TO FAKE IT

ART AND HOW TO FAKE IT

Advice to the Art-Lorn

DEAR MISS BOYD: Will you please tell me what is the matter with my studio? I am not an artist, but I am very artistic, and I have left no stone unturned to make my studio the very haunt of all that is free, etc., in the Village. I have a black floor, orange curtains, a ukulele made of a cigar-box, a leaky gas-jet, a back-number of a Russian newspaper, and as many cock-roaches, Chinese back-scratchers, and different shades of paint as anybody. Also I make a point of encouraging the milder vices, such as smoking; I have ash-trays everywhere. It has been the dream of my life to be a literary and artistic center, but somehow people do not flock as I had hoped they would do. If you can tell me what is the matter I shall be most grateful. Signed.

ARTISTIC.

(The trouble is with the ash-trays; remove them. Get into the habit when alone of crushing out your cigarette against the wall-paper, or dropping it on the floor and carelessly grinding it into the rug, or tossing it in the general direction of the fire-place, if you have one, being very sure never to look anxiously after it to see where it lands. This easy manner on your part will do more than anything else to put your guests at ease. Soon they will be using your studio as if it were their own, going to sleep with their feet in the coffee-tray, wiping paint from their hair and elbows upon the sofa-pillows, making sketches on the walls of unclothed people with small heads and over-developed muscles, and dropping ashes just everywhere.)

Dear Miss Boyd: I have just decided to open a restaurant, and I have rented an old stable on Sullivan Street just south of the Square, which I think ought to make a terribly attractive restaurant. I don't know anything about cooking, but I think I can get somebody to do the cooking. I am writing to ask you three questions: How shall I furnish it?

What shall I name it? What should be my attitude towards my clients? Very truly yours,

AMBITIOUS.

P. S. I had thought of naming it either *The Topaz Armadillo*, *The Ultra-Violet Brontosaurus*, or *The Boeotian Swine*. None of these has been used yet, so far as I know. But I shall do nothing until I hear from you. A.

(I would advise you against using any of the three names you mention. It is impossible to be sure that somebody else has not already taken them. If I were you I would call it simply *The Stable*, which is so obvious a name for a Greenwich Village restaurant that I am sure nobody has ever thought of it. As regards the furnishing and decoration, I would suggest that you make very few changes. Keep the stalls just as they are; in each of them put a table made of a wide plank supported by two saw-horses; let the seats be chopping-blocks, in one of which might be sticking jauntily a bright sharp axe. The walls should be enlivened with pieces of old harness,—bridles, blinders, bits, etc.,—as well as photographs of Black Beauty and the One-Horse Shay; and

there must be of course a rusty horseshoe over the door. Let the restaurant be lighted by smoky kerosene lanterns, and barn-dance music be furnished by an old-style graphophone with a painted horn. Serve the food in charming, hand-painted, little mangers, or in little canvas bags embroidered in assorted wools, which fit neatly over the heads of the guests. Each guest should be supplied with a cunning little whip to crack if the fodder is slow in arriving. As for the food itself, I would suggest that here you diverge a bit from your general scheme, and serve, instead of dry oats and bran, half-cooked spaghetti, sticky Armenian pastries, and liqueur-glasses of sweetened Turkish mud. As for yourself, you should circulate among your guests freely, dressed in a gunny-sack adorned with coarse tassels of red rope. Assume the habit, too, of singling out each evening from among your clients some entire stranger, seating yourself beside him, hanging your arm about his neck, and daintily gobbling up the choice bits of his food; in this way you will not only acquire a reputation as a wit, but you will also keep sufficiently well-nourished.

N. B. Be sure you have a hay-loft, where

the guests may recline after dinner. This is important. The loft should have no more pitch-forks in it than observance of the tradition requires, and should be lighted only by a bin of white beans.)

Miss N. Boyd,

Dear Madam:

I am a plain, honest woman, with a house in Waverly Place where I let Furnished Rooms to Artists. I have a lot of trouble with them. In the first place they are awfully careless about their Rooms, they never hang-up anything, there are always dirty shirts on the floor, to say nothing of bread-crusts and rinds of hambologna. I have an awful time with them. Then another thing when they are not laying abed all day so I cant get in to do up the work, they are trying to set the chimny on fire burning up oily rags and peices of canvas all covered with paint, and setting up all night talk-talk-talking so as honest people cant get a wink of sleep. But all that, though theres no getting round it that its terrible trying and all that, is not the reason why I take my pen in hand to write you. Its about the rent. They dont pay it. I let it go and let it go and when

finaly I do get up curage to say something about it, because I suppose I have my rights just the same as Artists, all the time I am talking they draw pictures of me on the back of an envelope. Then they say, O, come on Ma, I thought you was a Patrun of the Arts. Whatever that may be. Then they promise to pay me the next day, because somebody is going to buy a picture off them, but next day comes and they ether say the same thing all over or else they're gone. Id hold their baggage, only they never have any, only an empty gin-bottle all daubed over with red and purple and undressed women, or a fancy-dress costume so holy and dirty its of no use to anybody or two or three copies of a magerzine called the little reveiw. What will I do, dear Miss Boyd, I thought seeing you knew so much about Artists mabe you might be able to tell me. With grateful appreciation in advance I remain, yours very truly,

LANDLADY.

(There's only one thing to do. You can't go through their clothes while they're asleep, because they always sleep in their clothes. And it's never any good serving a summons on them

to appear in court; because they just don't appear. The only thing to do is this. Buy a tin bank and place it on the table in the hall. Above it tack the following placard:

FREE THINKERS! FREE LOVERS!
and FREE BOOTERS!

If you have any Heathen Pity in your Hearts
Drop a Nickel in the Slot for the Starving
Baby-Anarchists of Russia!

WHO DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO
THE CAUSE OF ANARCHY IS
MID-VICTORIAN!!!

I think you will have no further trouble.)

Dear Miss Boyd:

Mine is a strange case. I have always thought I should like to be an artist. Not because I care anything about art, for I don't, but because artists lead such a free life. As a little boy, I was different from my young companions: I did not like to study; I objected to going to bed directly after supper; and I was often discovered pulling the wings off flies, or stealing sweets from my little sister. Later, my disinclination to apply myself to any pro-

fession, such as the ministry, the law, etc., surpassed only by my unfailing instinct for the salacious passages in the novels which I read, caused my parents to believe that I must be artistic. They have sent me to New York to study art. But as I have no particular talent in any direction, being more versatile than intensive, I fear, I am somewhat at a loss. I can neither write, paint, model, sing, dance, play a musical instrument, design costumes, nor act, nor am I a sympathetic listener. What shall I do? Signed,

JURGEN.

(Remember this. When all else fails, two courses remain open to a man: he can always give lectures on the drama, or edit anthologies of verse; for neither of these is either talent or training necessary.)

Dear Miss Boyd: Will you kindly advise me how to furnish and decorate my new studio in 12th Street? I am not an artist, but I do not get on very well with my husband, so I thought I would get me a studio in 12th Street. Although I have no artistic capabilities, and am totally colour-blind, I can make extremely good coffee, so I am sure there will

always be artists dropping in, and I want the place to be perfect in every detail. Also kindly suggest what subjects the artists will be likely to discuss, so that I can read up a little. Very sincerely,

A WIFE AND MOTHER.

(The safest thing is a Chinese studio; everybody has one, so nobody can criticize yours. The correct way to decorate it is as follows: Floor, black; ceiling, blue; walls, lemon-yellow, olive-green, cherry-red, plum-violet, respectively; curtains, persimmon-orange, made of tarlatan, unhemmed; couch on floor; cushions on floor, books on floor, tea-tray on floor, cigarette-butts on floor, guests on floor. Get everything you can find that is made of teak-wood,—you can always tell it: dull-black, lot of carving and mother-of-pearl. Everything that isn't teak-wood, paint vermilion. Have something lacquered; doesn't matter what. Have a lot of pictures of tom-cats and tigers around, also Japanese prints as follows: Little men going up hill in rain-storm; small tree with large bird in it; lady writing letter with paint-brush; lady shooting at shoji with bow and arrow; actor with tongue out of mouth.

These are all very inexpensive; if you buy a tea-set in Mott Street, they will probably come wrapped around the cups. Be sure to burn incense night and day, with the windows closed; this cannot fail to give atmosphere.

As for conversation, the artists will talk about El Greco, Cézanne and Gauguin. It is safe to remark of El Greco, "Well, look at Cézanne!"; of Cézanne, "Still, look at Gauguin!"; and of Gauguin, "Have you ever been to Tahiti?" You say you are colour-blind. Divulge the fact to no one. But never lose the opportunity of describing in detail the colour-scheme of any landscape, smock, or picture at which you and your companions may be gazing. Your success is assured.)

DEAR MISS BOYD: Since you have so much influence with the up-town thrill-hunters, can't you sort of give 'em a hint that the Village isn't fashionable any more? They're thicker down here than garbage-cans, little theatres, and Italian babies; they've bought up all the north-light, and hung batik over it; and the poor homeless native has not where to lay his chrome yellow and Prussian blue. Yours,

MATISSE PICASSO.

(The condition of which you complain will not continue long. Since the prohibition of spirituous liquors in the States, there has been an ever-increasing migration of the art-just-lovers from Harlem to Montparnasse. The *Quartier Latin* [Scandinavian Quarter] of Paris, is full of them.)

Dear Miss Boyd: I am Chinese girl, but attend American college, Vassar, and enjoy very much. My room-mate is very nice girl, blue eye, yellow hair, very pretty, but in one fact very peculiar. She insist on decorating room with old awful Chinese screen and picture and little ugly dog and Buddha which is not true god, also old piece of weaving made long time ago all by hand and most uneven by dirty peasant, all thing such as in my country no nice family permit be found in attic. In vain I exhort, O cherished room-mate, behold beautiful American golden-oak rocking-chair, behold wonderful miraculous American Victrola, behold incomparable American imitation lace, all, all made by machinery and without flaw!—In vain, in vain. She tack up on wall unspeakable object such as my baby-brother could do better, she offend my artistic eye with

hideous Chinese teak-wood table-atrocity, she break up our friendship. Advise me, most honourable Boyd. I am in despairs. Signed,

CHU CHIN CHOW.

(Unfortunately, this letter arrives too late for me to answer it.—N. B.)

POWDER, ROUGE AND LIPSTICK

POWDER, ROUGE AND LIP-STICK

or

Handsome is as Handsome Does

PERSONS:

Robert Avery-Thompson, *subject to recurrent attacks of acute idealism.*

Gwendolyn Avery-Thompson, *his wife.*

SCENE I: *A Dressing-Table. Discovered seated, a vision of ingenuous charm, Mrs. Avery-Thompson, putting the finishing touches to her toilet. Discovered standing, on first one foot and then the other, Mr. Avery-Thompson. The Avery-Thompsons are going out to dinner. Mr. Avery-Thompson is wondering just when.*

HE (*suddenly seized by a cramp of Let-Us-Lead-the-Simple-Life*): Sweetheart, I wish you wouldn't use so much powder.

SHE (*in righteous astonishment, arrested in the act of spanking a flat, round puff upon her*

countenance): Why, dearest, I don't use *any*! A little tiny box like this lasts me just *ages*!

HE: Oh, but, darling, just look at your nose!

SHE (*considering herself in the mirror with pardonable satisfaction*): Well,—what's the matter with my nose?

HE: There's too much powder on it.

SHE: Bob, you're crazy! I don't use *half* so much powder as most women do. I'm *frightfully* careful. I *never* go out without first taking a mirror to the window and looking at myself by daylight, and you know it.

HE (*unimpressed, thrusting his hands into his pockets and sauntering moodily up and down the rug*): Rum idea, anyhow, pasting up the perfectly good human face with a lot of chalk dust.

SHE (*turning to stare at him speculatively*): Come on, Bob. Out with it. Who is she?

HE: Who is who?

SHE: This blue-nosed hockey-champion you've got religion from.

HE (*hitting the writing-desk with his fist*): I tell you there isn't anybody. It's just me. I've been thinking.

SHE (*in a subdued voice*): Oh. (*After a*

moment, timidly) Was the coffee bad, dear?

HE (*scathingly*): I suppose you think that's funny.

SHE (*with a puzzled, childlike stare*): Think what's funny?—Oh. (*Suddenly she sniffs, and lifts her handkerchief to her eyes*) I didn't mean that at all, Bob! I wasn't trying to be funny! You're just too hateful for anything!

HE (*contritely, coming over to her and kissing the top of her head*): I'm sorry, sweetheart. Please don't cry.

SHE: Get away! (*pushing him*) I'm not going to cry. Do you think I want to have to do my face all over again? (*She indulges herself the luxury of one sniff more, and then picks up the puff again.*)

HE (*with irritation*): There now, look at you! There you go again! It's just a habit, I tell you.

SHE (*furiously, flinging the powder-puff wildly across the room, where it perches debonairly in a bowl of roses*): BOB! Willyouleavemealoneor*won*chu!

HE (*mildly*): Why, dearest.

SHE: Don't you call me dearest! Don't you

call me dearest again until you mean it! I'm sick of your calling me dearest all the time, and all the time finding fault with me!

He: Why, dearest, I was only suggesting that you——

She (*in an abandonment of exasperation*): Ya-a-a-ah!

(*There is a ponderous silence.*)

She (*calmly, picking up a stick of perfumed scarlet pigment and applying it deftly to a pursed-up scarlet mouth*): Bob, it's a queer thing. When you first met me you thought I was wonderful, just as I was, so wonderful that you insisted upon marrying me; and the minute you were married to me you began to want to change me. I can't understand men. I don't know whether it's because they're so complex or because they're so simple.

He: But, Gwen, dear, when I first met you you weren't doing all these things to your face. It's a trick you've picked up in the last few months.

She (*with a shrill and scornful giggle*): Oh, is it!—It's a trick you've caught on to in the last few months, you mean, since you began coming in here and watching me get ready!

And after this you can just stay out, that's what you can do. You're no help to *me*!—Last few months. Hmfhthph!

Silence falls again like a shawl over a parrot cage. Mrs. Avery-Thompson, under the impression that her countenance has become distorted by passion, proceeds to make up all over again. Having squeezed some cold-cream from a tube out upon a many-coloured cloth, with one sweep of the hand, and rather in the manner of a painter scraping his palette-knife across a finished canvas, she destroys the whole effect. Then she begins. She carefully removes all traces of the cold-cream, and applies another kind of cream, which smells of camphor. This she manipulates softly about her chin and the corners of her eyes. Having as carefully removed all traces of this, she dabs her forehead, cheeks and chin with a linen cloth soaked in rose-water, and for the ensuing two minutes sits blandly at ease, doing nothing at all, allowing this to dry. Next she gently covers her whole face, avoiding the brows and lashes, with a very superior species of vanishing-cream. When this is dry, but not too dry, just dry enough, she powders heavily and lavishly, afterwards dusting her face with a bit

of absorbent cotton. Having done which, she rouges her cheeks thinly and skilfully to the eyelids and to the forehead, not forgetting a solicitous pat upon the chin. Now, slightly parting her lips, she incarnadines them generously, inside and out, not too scrupulously observing their natural contours. With a small stick of dark grease-paint she adventurously outlines for herself two admirable eyebrows.

Then come the lashes. Taking a little brush from a small red box and applying it, slightly dampened, to the dark-brown domino within, she squints and beads and grimaces as if she would never have done. But finally, having separated the clinging lashes by flicking them through the fine part of the comb, and dusted from her cheeks the cinders thus resulting, in more time than it takes to tell it, Mrs. Avery-Thompson is someone else again.

SHE (*brightly*): All right, dear. I'm ready.

HE (*rising briskly from the armchair in which he has fallen asleep*): Good.—Now I'll get ready.

SHE (*uneasily*): What do you mean?

HE: Why, it's my turn now. Get up. (*He lifts her from her bench, deposits her in the armchair, and seats himself before the mirror.*)

SHE: Bob, don't be ridiculous! Come along! We'll be late!

HE (*with elaborate sarcasm*): Oh, no, I don't think so.—Where's the red paint?

SHE (*rushing to the dressing-table and rescuing the lip-stick from his jovial grasp*): Bob! You stop it! Come on! I'm hungry!

HE (*expostulating*): Can't go like this! What do you take me for? All naked like this! Where's the eyelash-dirt? If I can't have my eyes looking like a couple of star-fish, I won't go a step.

(*After a last ineffectual attempt to wrest his weapons from him, she goes back to the chair and sinks down in it, wringing her hands.*)

HE (*blissfully, after a moment, turning upon her two apoplectic cheeks, a nose like a tomb-stone, and the morbid eye-sockets of a coal-heaver*): All right. I'm ready.

SHE (*bursting into terrified weeping*): Oh, Bob, darling, don't! *Please* don't!

(*Two round tears force their way through the mascaro and roll down her face like twin black pearls; then two more, and then several more.*)

HE: Well, will you stop doing it if I will?

SHE (*desperately*): No! It's not fair! It's

altogether different! (*A thought strikes her, and she becomes calm.*) I'll tell you what I *will* do, though.

HE (*lovingly fingering the eyebrow-pencil*): Well?

SHE: I'll swear off painting if you'll swear off——

HE: What, smoking?

SHE (*placidly*): No,—shaving.

HE (*astonished and hurt, but summoning a heavy smile*): Oh, come, Gwen,—that's childish! It's not the same thing at all.

SHE (*with insolent amusement*): I thought you'd say that. It *is* the same thing, merely an attempt to improve our appearance for the sake of others.

HE: Aw,—but be *reasonable*!

SHE (*airily*): I can't. I'm a woman.

HE (*leaning forward abruptly and scrutinizing her, not without satisfaction*): You've got an awfully dirty face, whatever you are. Just look at yourself.

SHE (*catching her breath in a wild sob*): Oh, Bob, how can you be so hay-hay-hateful! You don't lu-hu-hu-hu-huv me any more!

HE (*conscience-stricken, falling on his knees beside her*): Oh, sweetheart, I'm a brute,—

forgive me. Don't cry, darling, don't; I'm awfully sorry.—Come on, let's make it up.

SHE (*gazing at him tenderly and bursting into a shriek of laughter*): Oh, Bob, you look so funny!

HE (*uncomfortably, from behind a fatuously indulgent smile*): That's right, dear, laugh.

SHE (*putting her arms about him in a convulsive embrace*): Oh, I do love you so! I'll stop putting on the nasty-horrid make-up if you really want me to, dearest!

HE: Oh, there's the brave baby! (*He whispers in her ear.*) Whose little girl are you?

SHE (*in a loud, proud voice, to the world at large*): Bobby'th!

SCENE II: *A piano. Discovered seated, with her back to the observer, Mrs. Avery-Thompson, playing a simple Scotch melody. Enter Mr. Avery-Thompson in evening things, yanking at his tie. The Avery-Thompsons are going to the opera. Mrs. Avery-Thompson is wondering just when.*

HE: Can't get the cursed tie right! Deuce of a time with it. Damn thing's alive! . . .

You better hurry up, dear, and get ready. We're late now.

SHE (*turning on the piano-stool and rising*): I'm all ready.

(*He stares at her. Then he leans forward and stares at her again.*)

HE (*in a startled voice*): Gwen! Aren't you feeling well?

SHE (*cheerfully*): Never felt better.

HE (*waving behind him for a chair and sitting heavily upon it, without taking his eyes from her*): You look like the very devil! (*He draws from his pocket a neatly-squared handkerchief and, without waiting to unfold it, hastily mops his brow, still staring at her.*) Gwen, for Heaven's sake, what have you been doing to yourself?

SHE (*modestly, with awkward, purplish hands smoothing down her magnificent black and silver evening gown, above which rises a rather boyish neck, sun-burned into a V, a fairly well-shaped but sallow face with a pale mouth, a pink and gleaming nose, and no eyebrows whatsoever, from which in turn recedes honestly a flat surface of straight and sand-colored hair*): Nothing at all, dear. That's

just it. I'm my own sweet, simple, natural, girlish self.

(*She smiles at him shyly. He grunts at her and picks up a magazine from the table at his elbow.*)

(*There is silence.*)

HE (*flinging down the magazine*): Listen to *me*. Will you go upstairs and get yourself ready to go to the opera, or won't you?

SCENE III: *A Divan. Discovered seated with his head in his hands, Mr. Avery-Thompson. Enter Mrs. Avery-Thompson, frou-frouing a little, delicately fragrant, scarlet-lipped, brilliant-eyed, sinuous, enchanting.*)

SHE (*in the accepted manner*): Have I kept you waiting?

HE (*in the accepted manner, rising*): Not at all. Not at all.

SHE (*in the accepted manner, pouting*): You might tell me that I look well.

HE (*in the accepted manner*): Charming, my dear. (*Then, roughly*) Come here to me! (*He pulls her down beside him on the divan.*)

SHE (*wistfully*): Bob,—do you love me?

HE (*savagely, seizing her in his arms*): I adore you!

SHE: Mind the paint! (*She whispers in his ear*) Whose little girl am I now?

HE (*ruefully, and in a low voice, snuggling his head upon her shoulder*): Bobby'th.

OUT OF REACH OF THE BABY

OUT OF REACH OF THE BABY

I AM so sick of things being put where I can't reach them, just to get them out of reach of the baby!

Of course, I was just as sorry as anybody when the baby swallowed the buttonhook and nearly died. But just the same, it's a disgusting spectacle,—a large family of grown men and women all going about with their shoes unbuttoned; and it does seem as though there might be a compromise.

It was father's idea. Father is crazy about the baby. Really, you'd think that weakness and helplessness were virtues, the admiration father has for them. One day after dinner he arose, placed one hand on the back of his chair and the other inside his weskit, and announced: that from that time on, whatsoever there might be in the house which could, under the most fantastic circumstances, endanger the health of a baby should be, by the aid of a derrick,

hoisted to the high shelf in the storeroom, out of reach of us all.

Now when you consider how determined a baby always is to kill itself, and how little it really takes to kill a baby, and when you consider that "the house," as father hastened to explain when he saw us all moving into the garage, comprises also the garage, the wash-house, the cook-house, the boat-house, the dog-kennel, the chapel and the ash-can,—you can readily imagine how full a life we lead since the day the baby ate the buttonhook.

It's an enormous house, ours. Some people don't care much for the style of architecture, because it wasn't built by the Egyptians, or the Romans, or the women of Tahiti; we built it ourselves, and nobody has quite forgiven us. But there's no denying that it's enormous; it has forty-five rooms (or forty-eight; I never can remember which). It has north, east, south and west exposure; and while it must be admitted that the north windows open on a court and the south on a back-yard, the fact that all the apartments in the east wing, as well as all those in the west wing, look out upon a very handsome ocean, rather

more than makes up for it. Also, the plumbing is wonderful.

People used to love to come and visit us, because father is fairly well-to-do, and always gave everybody a wonderful time. There was always a queen or two dropping in to tea, and a grand duke to make a fourth at auction.

But since the day that all the rum—the only thing that made our tea bearable—and all the playing-cards, were put on the high shelf out of reach of the baby, there's been a decided lapse in our calling-list.

In the first place, we never invite anybody any more. At least, we children don't. We're ashamed to. Nothing to do but walk about on tip-toe and count the rooms, and the whole place smelling to heaven of odorless talc!

Except for the milk-man, who still calls regularly, nobody ever comes near the house at all. That is, of course there are still father's friends. But I meant, nobody interesting.

And people are beginning to snicker at the very mention of our name.

"Fyodor," said my father to me one day, when he met me in the act of carrying a step-ladder into the store-room, "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

"I should worry," I replied. "Let it fall. It's time we had a new house."

Whereat father flew into the most dreadful pet, and shut me in the closet without my luncheon. And that was that.

Father is a politician. He has spent the best years of his life in an endeavour to make the world safe for stupidity. It has been an up-hill struggle, but at last things begin to look as if his dream were about to come true.

Mother is more artistic. She is so artistic that if you strike *d* and *c* together on the piano, it sets her teeth on edge.

Of course, it's not as if we didn't try to reach the high shelf. You'd be astonished to see all the different kinds of step-ladders there *are* hidden about in those forty-eight rooms, all painted blue and red, or black and yellow, to make them look like rocking-horses. But it's terribly difficult. Because, though sometimes you manage to get high enough to pull something down, you never get high enough to see what it is you're pulling; you just take the first thing you touch, and pretend you're satisfied.

It's not as if it were a nice baby, jolly, sweet-tempered, bright, and all that. It's a nasty, snivelling baby. It has weak eyes and a weak tummy, there is always a pin sticking into it somewhere, and it would rather howl than not.

And then, it's such a stupid baby. It's quite old, for a baby, but it can't walk a step. It won't try to walk, it's so afraid of a little tumble. So it crawls. But it crawls just everywhere.

And it can't talk, either. Of course, if you say to it, "mama", "horsie", "capitalist", "communism", "art", it repeats the words after you; but it hasn't the faintest notion what it's saying.

I said to mother, once, that the baby was stupid. She did not deny it. But she said, "All the more reason, then, that we should give up our lives for the little, helpless thing."

"I don't see why," I disagreed. "It will always be stupid, no matter what we do."

"Ah, yes," sighed my mother, piously rolling up her eyes toward the floor above, "but the highest duty of the strong is to protect the weak. And to make them happy. What nobler life could a man wish, my son, than to

pick up all day long the spoons which his neighbor throws upon the floor? We must not be proud. So long as he crawls, we must crawl, too. We must confine our conversation to words of one syllable or less. And, in order that he may never know his inferiority, and have his feelings hurt, we must employ all our intelligence in an endeavour to make ourselves as stupid as he is."

I was silent.

"What do you say!" pleaded my mother, gently and brightly, in the manner of one soliciting recruits in a holy cause.

"I say," I retorted, turning on my heel and starting for the door, "that it's a pity someone doesn't drop a brick on his head."

"For shame!" cried my parent, aghast. "Your own little baby brother!"

There are quite a number of us in our family, and some of us really have talent. Fritz, the oldest boy, was always very musical. He was getting on very well, indeed he was well on the road to becoming a world-famous violinist. But since father put his fiddle on the top shelf out of reach of the baby, he has

fallen off considerably in his technique. Of course, it *is* a handicap.

Isadora, the oldest girl, always wanted to be a dancer. But they wouldn't let her, because it would shake the house and wake the baby. She pleaded that there is a kind of dance where you don't lift your feet from the floor. But they said they didn't believe that was really dancing. And so they wouldn't let her, anyhow. (She became, finally, an instructor of calisthenics in a girls' school.)

Sara might have been a great actress. She had a marvelous voice. She never opened her mouth but a little chill went up and down your spine, and you wanted to laugh and cry and kiss her shoes. But of course, if people won't let you speak above a whisper—well, she's gone into the movies now, and is making *piles* of money.

It was just the same with Enrico, only his was a singing voice. He died, not long ago, obscure, untended, and heart-broken. I couldn't help thinking how different it might have been, if only he'd been brought up in a different family.

As for me, Fyodor, I always wanted to be a novelist. And for years I have given up all

my time to writing. Lately, of course, they have put my pen and ink and typewriter on the top shelf out of reach of the baby, which *is* a handicap. But in spite of that, with the aid of a burnt match, the only kind of match we are permitted to have in the house, I keep on. I have written books which, could you read them, would tear up your world from its foundations and build it again, would allay for all time the ills which now assail you, and provide you with others, books which would rend your soul, wring your heart, and stretch your mind to the point of physical pain. But you will never read them. For, as fast as I write them, they are put on the top shelf out of baby's reach.

Of course most of us,—and there are a great many more, whom I have not mentioned—have left home. As for those of us who remain, it is not so much that we remain as that we haven't gone yet.

Only yesterday I had a post-card from Pablo, the last of us to leave. Pablo is a painter,—and it *was* difficult for him, having his palette and all his paints on the top shelf, out of reach of the baby. He has gone to a

place where the top shelf is on a level with the wainscoting. "Am having a fine time," he writes. "Wish you were here." And do you know, I've half a mind to go.

LOOK ME UP

LOOK ME UP

MY days, gentle reader, are a headlong flight before the onrushing hordes of the socially-minded.

I flee from border to border, from rural fastness to urban looseness.

I gather no moss.

No grass, not even a mushroom, grows under my feet.

I am seeking a place where I may be alone.

With the money I have expended in keeping my passport in order, I could have bought myself a nice little house just like everybody else's nice little house in Pelham Bay.

I have preferred to collect visas.

And Pelham Bay has turned out as one man, checked its croquet-set, laid straw at the roots of its Dorothy Perkins, and followed the mark of my French heel in the mud through fourteen countries and into the jaws of Monte Carlo.

Why people should pursue me, no one knows.

I am neither rich nor beautiful.

I have stolen no jewels, kidnapped no babies, founded no religion, built no mouse-traps.

I have simply made the mistake of starting to run. And everybody is chasing me.

I am a hen that has scuttled to a distant corner of the barnyard in order that she may be hungry by herself.

And every hen for farms around is convinced I have a kernel of corn.

Most people, I have noted in passing, observing them as I do fleetingly from the decks of steamers, from the platforms of trains, from behind lamp-posts, around corners and through thick veils, are afraid to be alone in the dark.

They are always forming themselves into clubs.

In order that they may smoke together.

Drink together.

Narrate improprieties together.

Look out of windows at taxis together.

And grow bald together.

They imagine that the volume of fatigue and the avoirdupois of doom become in this way divided by the number of the club's membership.

And that no member receives more than he can nicely bear.

As for me, I was never a joiner.

The feeling which stirs a mob to applause, to derision, to violence or to tears, stirs me only to uneasiness of the alimentary canal.

Over me, no less than another, bend the malign forces of Providence.

But I may honestly say that I fear no catastrophe save that of the companionship of tiresome people. I refuse to be one of a group.

It chafes me when people say, comprising me in their remark, "Us Americans."

It rubs me when women, recruiting me by their glance, declaim, "We women feel—"

It irks me even that I have a life membership in that degenerate sporting-club known as the Human Race.

Persons are constantly making the mistake of supposing that just because they once lived in the same street, because they both are strangers in a foreign capital, because they have attended the same Keeley-Cure, or because they have married the same woman, they must perforce have a world of things in common.

As a matter of fact, most people have nothing at all in common, beyond that cold perspiration budding from the strong man's brow at

the thought that some day or other he may find himself spending a half-hour alone.

For my part, I fail to feel necessarily a choking surge of affection for the butcher, the baker, the gas-fixture-maker who happened to buy the house next-door to the house I rented.

For the Belgian who, at the time of his birth, chanced to be traveling with his mother in my home town.

Or for the forty thousand or so estimable and active women who received their degrees at the university from which I was at one time expelled.

I wish them no harm.

I merely desire that they may enjoy their felicities well out of my sight and earshot.

I have at home a dog, a charming animal.

We have the same tastes.

We prefer the country to the city.

When we sally forth for a walk, we insist on going by way of the hedge, the gutter, the pasture, and the bit of pine-wood.

We do not like cats, but we are a little jealous of them.

We like to lie on the rug and look at the fire.

And we prefer our meat a little underdone.

I have much more in common with my dog than I have with my neighbor.

Who is a celibate.

A Christian Scientist.

A vegetarian.

And plays talking records on the Victrola.

I received today a letter from a young woman who went to boarding-school with me. At least, she says she went to boarding-school with me. I do not remember her.

And on the strength of her having been to boarding-school with me, she wishes me to come and take tea with her, and talk over old times.

Whose old times, hers or mine? Our past is not in common.

If she should talk over her old times, I should very likely fall asleep.

Should I talk over mine, she would undoubtedly leave the room.

I had an enemy.

He was a very good enemy.

I felt that I could rely on his hostility as on few things in this shifting life.

He was invariably inimical to my ideals, my aspirations, my opinions, even my welfare.

He publicly disparaged my work, my mental capacities, my moral stamina, my habits, and my figure.

In short, he hated my vitals.

Today, as I stood on my balcony, looking out over the Seine, I saw the postman cross the street and disappear in the doorway beneath me. A moment later there came a knock at my door, and the maid entered with an urgent note.

"After all—we are both Americans in a strange city—why not let bygones be bygones?"—will I take luncheon with him on Tuesday?

No, I will not.

I will lunch alone on Tuesday, with an open book beside my plate.

In the first place, the fact that we both are Americans has nothing to do with it.

Had I wished to spend my life lunching with Americans, I need not have come to Paris.

In the second place, Paris is not a strange city.

If he feels it to be so, he might much better go back to Wichita at once.

In the third place, if I let bygones be bygones he is no longer my enemy.

And the fact that he is no longer my enemy not constituting him my friend, he becomes thus automatically a stranger to me.

And a stranger who has written me a presumptuous note.

Besides, I shall not be here on Tuesday.

It is now four o'clock in the afternoon.

At seven thirty-two, dear reader, I board the Orient Express for Constantinople.

But don't think for a moment I am going to Constantinople.

Ah, no.

The most awful experience of my life was in Constantinople.

Four girlhood friends, their husbands, their babies, their nurse-maids, and their incessant and insufferable conversation, all, all at the same hotel as myself.

And me flat on my back with a broken ankle, as helpless as a cat in paper shoes.

Ah, no.

Somewhere between Paris and Constantino-

ple, in the dead of night, in the silence of an uninhabited and uninhabitable land, at some lone and uncharted pumping-station, I shall lower myself softly forth from the window of my wagon-lit, and prayerfully watch the tail-lights winking on into the darkness.

And it will be days and days—

Possibly a week—

Before the virgin niece of the canned-corn-king

Who married my father's dipsomaniac cousin's epileptic widow

Gaily parts the poison ivy curtaining the door of my cave and cries,

"Oh, here you are at last! I've had the awfulest time finding you! Do be a dear and come out with me while I buy some dress-shields!"

FOR WINTER, FOR SUMMER

FOR WINTER, FOR SUMMER

PERSONS: Richard Morton, about to go off all by himself on a little outing.
Louise Morton, his wife.

SCENE: *The sunny, screened-in porch of an imposing edifice on Long Island Sound, which is known as a "cottage", because it is built over a cove instead of over a curbing. On his back in the big canvas hammock lies Mr. Morton, avidly devouring the racy bits in a bright new gun-catalogue. Spread out on his chest, ready to be called into service at a second's notice, are a road-map of New England and a Bangor & Aroostook time-table. He is wearing tennis shoes, very good-looking striped flannel trousers, and a disreputable, faded sweater dating back to sophomore days, which no power on earth, nor in the subways under the earth, has so far been able to sneak to a rag-man. Mrs. Morton, appetizingly frocked in lettuce-green organdie, sits in a wicker chair*

cretonned in lavender parrots, magenta moons and black persimmons, discontentedly turning the pages of a fashion-magazine; she is justly annoyed that skirts are getting long again. It is Wednesday. Last week-end's most mucilaginous guest has been pried away. Next week-end's most perspiring and uncomfortable has as yet thought up no handsome excuse for leaving the city so early. They are alone. From time to time Mr. Morton utters an exclamation of astonishment and delight; from time to time Mrs. Morton yawns, and the chair creaks with her restlessness.

HE: Whew,—that's a beauty!

SHE: *Oh*—hum.

(*Pause.*)

HE: Lemme see—does that make connections or—hm—"k"—what the devil does "k" mean?

(*The chair creaks.*)

SHE (*fretfully, laying down her magazine*): Dick, why can't I go, too?

HE: Wait a minute—2:38 from—no, that won't do—(*he lays down the time-table*)—what'd you say, dear?

SHE (*looking him boldly in the eye*): Why can't I go, too?

HE: Go where?

SHE: With you—to Maine.

HE: What do you mean, motor up with me to Bangor? It's awfully dusty, dear. And you'd hate coming back alone.

SHE (*staring obliquely at the leg of the wicker table*): I don't mean to come back. I mean to go where you go, into the woods and everything.

HE (*sitting up straight and staring at her*): *What?* Oh, Lou, you're crazy!

SHE (*pouting*): I don't see why.

HE: Oh, but Great Scott, Lou, show a little sense! It's absolutely impossible!

SHE (*staunchly, but her under-lip beginning to tremble a little*): I don't see why.

HE: Well—(*he picks up the road-map and looks at it helplessly, then turns to her again*). Excuse me for being so abrupt about it, dear, but you took me a little by surprise. Whatever put such an idea into your head?

SHE (*unhappily*): Oh, I don't know.

HE: It really isn't fit for a woman, you know, honey,—rough tramping, and half the

time not enough water to wash in. 'Twould kill you.

SHE (*stubbornly, turning a ring on her finger*): Agatha Walker went once with her husband.

HE: Yes, and came back with a sprained ankle. And a big, strapping girl at that.

SHE (*in a low voice*): 'Twasn't sprained. 'Twas strained.

HE: Oh, well,—hell. (*He flops down again among the cushions and picks up the road-map. She looks at him coldly, then rises and goes into the house. In a few moments she returns, holding a letter in her hand.*)

SHE (*in the sweet, plaintive voice of every-day conversation among nice people*): Dick, dear, would you mind putting this in the car for me, so that Victor will be sure to see it when he goes in for the mail?

HE (*heartily relieved that she has forgotten all about it*): You bet. Give her here.—But why didn't you stick it in the bag, child?

SHE (*with pretty simplicity*): He's already taken the letters from the bag, and he might not look again.

HE (*affably*): All *right*! Hand her over. Service is my middle name.

SHE (*watching him as she gives him the letter*): You won't forget it, will you, Dick? I want it to go at once.

HE: Nothing simpler. (*He takes the letter.*) But why all the rush? What is it? (*He looks at it; his face turns a dark red; he sits up abruptly; his rubber soles come spanking to the floor of the porch.*) Lou, how long has this been going on?

SHE (*innocently*): What been going on?

HE: How long have you been writing to Hamlin Jefferies?

SHE: Why—(*she goes to her chair and seats herself languidly*) I've always been writing to him, more or less. That is, we've never quite lost sight of each other since—well, since—

HE (*grimly*): Exactly,—since the day you tossed up a Chinese dime to see which of us you'd marry! Well, I want it to stop right here!

SHE (*raising two delicately-arched and carefully-weeded eyebrows*): Well, really, Dick!

HE (*losing his temper*): Yes, *really*, Dick!

What are you writing him about, that's what I want to know!

SHE: Why—(*she picks up her magazine and idly turns the pages*) I'm just inviting him out for a few days.

HE: Oh, you are, are you?—Damn few, if I have anything to do with it!

SHE (*slowly and absently, looking sidewise at a picture of an elegant long thin girl, holding on a leash an elegant long thin dog*): But you won't have anything to do with it, dearest, —er—you won't be here.

HE: What! You're waiting till after I'm —well, I'll be—(*he picks up the time-table and stares at it with unfocused gaze*).

SHE (*watching him from the tail of her eye*): It's not that, Dick. It's just that I believe in—in distributing my pleasures, you see. You ought to be glad there's somebody around I like, to keep me from being lonely while you're gone. (*She sighs.*) Men are terribly selfish.—Hm—I wonder if I could wear a veil like that.—Besides, you and Jeff never got on together very well. As I remember it, I was about the only taste you had in common.

HE (*gruffly*): Is he still in love with you?

SHE (*modestly*): Oh, I don't know. Prob-

ably not. He thinks he is. He's always asking me when I'm going to divorce you.

HE (*with a howl of fury*): Oh, he is, is he? Well, of all the—

SHE (*mildly, looking up*): Why, Dick, what a fuss you're making! Really, dear, it's far too hot to let oneself get so excited. Besides (*sweetly*), I always tell him there's not a chance in the world of my divorcing you,—for years yet.

(*He is speechless, purple with unavailing hate. He draws a little deck of rice-papers from his pocket, spills a great deal of tobacco upon and in the vicinity of one of them, and rolls himself a strange and uneven cigarette, to which with but scant success he applies a dry tongue, feverishly.*)

SHE: Dick, if you're not going to take my letter out, give it to me, and I'll do it myself.

(*He gives no sign of having heard her; he runs a finger up the seam of his cigarette, and thrusts it into his mouth.*)

SHE: Dick, give it back to me.

HE (*with coolness, striking a match*): Only on condition that you'll promise not to post it.

SHE (*laughing*): How silly! What do you suppose I want it for except to post it?

HE (*manfully*): Makes no difference. Promise you'll not post it, or I won't give it back.

SHE (*rising, and turning towards the house*): Well, I'll just have to write another one, then.

HE (*springing from the hammock and seizing her melodramatically by the wrist*): You will never write to that man again!

SHE (*with a spasmodic giggle*): Oh, Dick, if you only knew how much like a monkey you look, with your face all screwed up that way!

HE (*dropping her wrist and going back to the hammock*): Do as you please, Lou. I have no right to tell you what to do and what not to do. (*He relights his cigarette.*) But if you think you're going to pack me off into the woods out of the way, you're mistaken. No, madam. You don't get me out of this house this summer.

SHE: Oh, but dearest, don't be absurd! I wouldn't have you give up your trip for anything! (*Her distress is charming.*) It's just that I'd be so lonely without you, that's all. You mustn't think of staying home on my account.

HE (*thrusting out his chin*): I'm not. I'm staying home on account of Mr. Hamlin Jefferies, LL.D., Ph.D. It isn't right (*speaking now with the whining playfulness of self-pity*) —it isn't *right* for me to be running off to the timber just when a great man like that's coming to visit us. No. I gotta be here. I want to be on the step to meet him. I want to watch him smoking my cigars, winding my Victrola, making love to my wife. I want to kiss him. I want to lug his baggage around.

SHE (*with another sudden giggle*): Oh, Dick, you're so funny! Give me the letter, dear,—won't you?

HE (*rising*): No. I'll take it out to the car for you.

SHE (*suspiciously*): Dick, you won't—(*she drops her eyes under his look*) that is, you'll be sure to—

HE (*with coldness*): What do you take me for, anyhow, a doctor of philosophy, or something? Not me. When I say car, I mean car, car when I'm there, and car when I'm not there. Have no fear, Mrs. Morton. (*He picks up the map, the catalogue and the time-table, and thrusts them bitterly into the pocket of the hammock.*) Well, that's that.

SHE (*going to him and laying her hands on his chest*): Dick, I won't have it. I would never forgive myself. Your heart is set on it. It's no use your denying it. And you're not going to give it up.

HE: I don't deny it. But my heart's set on you, too. And I'm not going to give you up, either. At least (*turning his head away to hide his emotion*) "not for years yet."

SHE (*putting her arms about his neck*): Oh, dearest, I didn't mean that, you know I didn't! I was only joking!

HE (*not turning, but patting her head rapidly with fierce tenderness*): Pretty grim joke.

SHE (*rising to her toes and laying her cheek against his*): Give me the old letter, sweetheart. I'll tear it up.

HE (*shaking his head, which is still averted*): Oh, no. I should say not. I want you to have what you want. I don't want to stand in your way.

SHE (*kissing his cheek with many little kisses*): Look at me, darling,—don't turn your face away like that! Listen, dear, I'm not going to let you give it up. That's all there is to it!

HE (*soberly*): There's nothing else to do, dear. I'd be crazy with jealousy off there in the wilderness, thinking of you down here with the house full of your old beaux,—I couldn't stand it! I can't leave you. There's no two ways about it.

SHE (*helpfully*): Then,—why can't I go, too?

HE (*turning to her and seizing her in his arms*): Lou, you don't mean it!

SHE (*looking up at him brightly*): Why, yes, I do.

HE: You darling! Do you suppose you could stand it, way up there out of the world, with nobody around but me?

SHE: Why, Dick, I'd adore it! I don't want anybody around but you! It's only when you're not around that I—

HE (*gently*): Yes, dear. Let's forget all about that. (*He draws her over to the hammock.*) Come, sit down. (*They seat themselves side by side, he puts his arm about her, she lays her head on his shoulder.*)

SHE (*bubbling with happiness*): Oh, darling, I'm so excited! I'll go right into town to-morrow and get a lot of all kinds of rough clothes!

HE (*in whom already slight misgivings are beginning to take root*): Can't take very much, girl, must remember that,—too heavy to carry. It's an awfully primitive life you're going into.

SHE: Oh, I don't care! I shall just adore it! I'll do whatever you say.

HE (*dubiously*): I hope I'm not making a mistake, taking you along. If you don't like it, Lou, you won't hold it against me, will you?

SHE: Of *course* not! But I'm *sure* to like it! I *love* being out of doors!

HE (*resigning himself*): Well, you'll get all the out-of-doors you want this trip. It's out-of-doors even in-doors, up there.

SHE (*reaching into the hammock-pocket for the catalogue, the map and the time-table*): Don't be gloomy! Come, sweetheart, show li'l' Lou all the pretty guns! (*They turn the pages together in silence for a moment, she nestling her head close to his.*)

SHE: Oh, dearest, I was *so* afraid you wouldn't let me go!

HE (*puzzled*): Wouldn't let you go? What do you mean? (*Then suddenly he remembers something, and expels his breath in a soundless whistle.*) By George, that's right, too. You did want to go, didn't you?

SHE (*rubbing her cheek against his*): I was crazy to!

HE (*thoughtfully*): Hm.

SHE (*turning a page in the gun-catalogue*): Oh, what's that cute little baby one for? Shooting birds?

HE (*grimly, touching her hair with his lips*): No, dear. That cute little baby one's for the tired business man to commit suicide with.

"MADAME A TORT!"

"MADAME A TORT!"

EXCEPT for one circumstance, I should have been a great sculptor; or let us say, rather, to be exact, like the late M. Rodin a mighty modeler in clay.

And I would to heaven that on the twenty-first of March in the year of our dubious salvation nineteen hundred and twenty, I had remained quietly in my hotel in the rue d'Antin, and cut my own hair.

What ever became of her, that blue-eyed woman in mink, who slipped into my palm one day the address of a beauty-parlor in the rue de Rivoli, and left me, smiling, I do not know. And it is as well for us both.

I was free, and my life was before me. And what I was to do with that life, I knew well. I cared but little for the society of men, still less for that of the members of my own sex; I was content to be alone. I was not harassed by a desire to become a great actress, or to amass a large fortune. The feel of the cold

gray mud in my two hands was happiness enough.

As may be imagined, I gave but little thought to my personal appearance. The shape of my head was well enough, my neck was not short, my second toe was longer than the first. I bathed regularly, with plain soap and a stiff brush, cleaned my teeth twice a day, washed my hair before it needed it, and kept my nails filed to the ends of my fingers. I dressed simply, and fairly well. I came and went about my business exciting no comment.

The one office which I found it difficult to perform for myself was the cutting of my hair.

As long as I remained in England this did not greatly matter. I had a friend, an excellent person, whose delight it was sternly to shear me and fiercely to clip me up the back.

But it so happened that early in the year 1920 my fortunes called me to take up my residence on the Continent. I came to Paris. And on the twenty-first of March of that year I was moved to enter a hair-dressing establishment hard by the equestrienne statue of Jeanne d'Arc in the rue de Rivoli.

All that I wanted was a hair-cut, a simple manipulation of scissors about my ears. That was all I wanted, and I said as much. It should have cost me three francs.

A black-eyed man with a small waist and smelling of violets appeared before me, wringing his hands. He placed a chair at my back and bowed me into it. Deftly but not without tenderness he wrapped me in a large white apron and tucked a towel into my collar.

"Friction?" said he.

"No," said I, "hair-cut."

"Shampoo?" said he, "singe? a little *coup de fer?*"

"No," said I, "hair-cut. Just plain hair-cut."

He seized a comb, raked my hair violently back from my forehead, parted it in two places, pinched it, and rubbed it between his fingers.

"Ah," said he, "Madame has the hair beautiful *comme tout*, mais le scalp very dry. She is *habituée* to employ an anticalvitique, no?"

"No," I replied, "whatever that may be. I am not habituated to employ anything. Kindly cut my hair at once or hand me the scissors. I am in a hurry."

He sighed windily, and clasped his hands beneath his chin.

"*Madame a tort!*" said he.

He reached for an atomizer, and as if I had been a half finished bust, sprayed me, with scented water.

After which he cut my hair, not badly, clipped my neck, blew the chaff from my neck with a large hot breath, powdered me, brushed me, and thrust a mirror into my hand, at the same time addressing me rapidly in French.

"Very good," I replied, considering my reflection in the mirror.

Whereupon he caught me by the shoulder, drew me to a large basin of mottled red marble, depressed my head with a heavy hand, and all but drowned me in a sudden flow of scalding suds.

I came up choking and spluttering.

"Are you crazy?" I cried.

He laughed loud and long, and pushed me merrily back into the basin.

I sought to expostulate, but my mouth was full of soap and my ears ringing.

"Camomile?" he cried.

"No!" I shrieked with my expiring breath.

But he did not hear me.

"The serviette will protect the eyes," he said, placing in my grasp a towel, which I clutched with gratitude, and applied to my smarting vision.

He scratched me, rinsed me, wrung me, and drew me backward by the hair to the chair in which I had originally been seated. He wound a cloth about my head and pressed upon it heavily. Then, pushing a plug into the wall, he brought up beside me a great steel mouth with a twisted woven tail.

A hurricane hotter than the dry breath of the Sahara, roaring like a lion and smelling foully of gas, lifted my hair and whipped it out before me.

I heard a voice from very far away.

"Friction?" it seemed to have said.

It did not occur to me to reply.

I saw a fat bottle disappear abruptly from its niche on the shelf. Simultaneously a wave of perfume broke over me

"Manicure?" came the voice again, curiously caressing.

I clenched my fists and hid my nails desperately in the palms of my hands.

My hand was forced open, and the nails regarded coldly.

"Manicure!" shouted the voice.

Instantly a large presence in black silk and smelling of carnations was in the room. A small table was set up beside me, and my elbow sunk in a damp soft cushion.

The presence in black attacked me forthwith and without mercy.

Rhythmically, as she filed one finger, the end of the file stung like a wasp the next finger. The pain was intense, but it did not occur to me to protest.

When she had finished with one hand, she thrust it into a bowl of boiling soap, and grasped the other. She thrust back the cuticle cruelly, with a hard instrument; she lacerated it with scissors.

She applied white paste and red. She polished my nails until the ends of my fingers smoked.

"Madame has been here a long time?" said the woman by way of conversation.

"Years," I whispered, putting my hand to my brow. I thought of my peaceful home in the little vegetarian town of Letchworth, Herts., and tears suffused my eyes.

"Massage?" said the woman, brightly.

I blinked at her through my tears.

"Massage?" she repeated, in a happy tone.

"You know best," I sighed.

She squeezed my hands ardently, poured over them a milky fluid from a bottle marked *Lait du Citron*, dried them in her apron, patted them, and prepared to rise. The wind in my hair, which all this time had been wailing and howling like the soul of a poet in Purgatory, sobbed now and died away. After a whispered conversation at my back, I was seized and borne off to another part of the establishment.

I was deposited in another chair before another mirror. A towel was wound about my hair, and framed my gray face whitely. Bits of cotton were tightly wedged under this bandage at intervals.

"Madame is accustomed to have her face massaged regularly?"

"This is the first time," I replied with shame.

"*Madame a tort*," she sighed.

I closed my eyes.

A cream smelling of almonds was spanked upon my cheeks and rubbed into them. Cool water scented with roses was splashed into my

face. A grease reeking of camphor was applied. I felt firm palms beneath my chin, soft fingers at the corners of my eyes. Hot needles, like a tiny but powerful shower-bath, pricked me all over.

I have no recollection of leaving this room and returning to the other.

It may be that I fell asleep. It may be that I fainted.

In any case, when I came to my senses, I was seated once more in the room which I had first entered.

The odor of violets was all about me. A comb was being drawn through my hair savagely. Over an intense gas flame high up on the wall two pairs of curling-tongs were glowing red.

I arose with a shriek and seized the hand of my tormentor.

"Ça fait mal?—Pardon," he apologized delicately.

"You are not going to curl my hair," I cried. "I won't have it! My hair curls naturally, and I won't have it touched!"

He smiled benignly. "One little *coup* to turn under the ends, that is all."

"I won't have it touched!" I shouted.

"*Madame a tort*," he replied with calmness, and reached for the irons.

I was helpless in his hands. I dared not move, for fear I should be branded. I sat fearfully still, and let him have his way.

Smoke arose from my head. A strong smell of burning hair filled the room. I sobbed aloud, but made no comment.

It would be useless as well as harrowing to prolong the story of that fatal afternoon. I escaped at length, fled from the shop barefoot, with a white apron flying from my shoulders and the large neck of a broken hammermelis bottle in my hand, leapt into a moving taxi, babbled the address of the American Express Company, and lost consciousness.

I awoke in my bed in my hotel in the rue d'Antin.

On opening my eyes, the first object I beheld was a gigantic brown-paper parcel on the table beside me.

I stared at it for some time without recognition or interest.

Finally I arose, not without difficulty, and limped across the room for my scissors. I cut the cords of the parcel and poured out its contents upon the bed.

Paste of Almonds, Milk of Lemons, Sugar of Peaches, Water of Roses, Lotion of Oranges, Cucumbers' Blood; scalp-tonics, skin-tonics, preparations to remove hair, preparations to promote its growth; bleaches, dyes, rouges, powders, perfumes, brilliantines, water-softeners, bath-salts; sponges, plasters, brushes, pads; eye-brighteners, wrinkle-eradicators, and freckle-removers.

And with these was the bill, paid for me at the desk while I slept, and added to my account at the hotel—eight hundred and sixty francs and twenty-five centimes.

I arose in a despair too deep for tears, and removed the articles from the bed. I ranged them upon the bureau, the dresser, the shelf in the bath-room, the writing-desk, and the top of my wardrobe-trunk. The wrappers which I removed filled the waste-basket and overflowed upon the floor.

A warm and varied odor arose from the basket. I dropped to my knees beside it and buried my face in the scented paper.

As I lifted my eyes, I caught for the first time, in the mirror of the *armoire à glace*, my reflection.

I stared, unbelieving.

I arose, trembling, seated myself before my dressing-table, and gazed for a long time into the glass.

No, there was no mistake. I was beautiful.

My skin was smoother and whiter than an infant's; my cheeks were a delicate rose, my lips were carmine. My brows were a thin dark line; my lashes cast shadows on my cheek. My hair was a mass of gentle undulations, and its color—its color was the most wonderful thing I had ever seen.

From that day to this I am a slave to the most exacting of tyrants.

Three times a week I pass through a certain portal in the rue de Rivoli, and deliver myself up into the hands of my creators. Daily, night and morning, long weary hours, while the world sleeps, while the world canters in the Bois de Boulogne, I sit before my mirror, patting steaming, brushing. I will not grow old. I will be beautiful always.

It was at one time my great delight to travel. I thought I should live to see all quarters of the globe. But more troublesome than plaster casts to pack and transport from place to place, are the thousand jars and bottles of a woman's beauty. I could not sleep at night in my

wagon-lit, for thinking of my trunks behind in the luggage-van. What would I find this time at the end of the journey? What unguent spilled, what hats and gowns destroyed? For I clothe myself now in the perishable fabrics of the *chic*.

Wrinkles came, from worry, and my hair turned white.

I saw to that.

But it was cheaper, in the long run, quietly to settle down in Paris.

There comes over me at times a longing for the old free days, a desire to hold damp clay in my hands once more. But one glance at my nails, so rosy, so roundly pointed, so softly bright, so exquisite from the loving care of years—and I know that I shall never work again.

All that is in the past. Let it be.

The future holds its own bitter struggle.

"TWO SOULS WITH BUT A SINGLE THOUGHT"

"TWO SOULS WITH BUT A SINGLE THOUGHT"

DEAR reader, by the time you receive this, I shall have left my husband.

No, no, it is useless to try to reason with me. It is useless to throw down the magazine and rush to the telephone and squeak into my ear, "My *dear* Nancy! What *can* you be thinking of! Cecil is such a *charming* fellow! And *such* a sense of humor!"

I know all about that. Ha! Ha! Ha! Pardon my sardonic mirth.

It will be difficult to get a divorce. He has not deserted me; he has not committed that dreadful thing which the prosecuting attorney so prettily calls "misconduct"; his treatment of me has never been cruel and abusive; and he supports me in the penury to which I am accustomed. As for incompatibility,—ha! ha! ha! Pardon my derisive shout.

No. It is like this.

You know, dear reader, how screamingly funny I am; how feverishly, month after month, you rip open the magazine and turn, trembling with eagerness, to the *menu*, to see if by any happy chance there be an *hors-d'œuvre* by me; how, gasping for breath, you read me aloud to your best friend's fiancé, and he laughs so hard he nearly falls out of the hammock.

Well, as you know, my husband is funny, too. He runs a humorous column in a New York paper, for all the world like F. P. A. It is very possible that you read him every morning with your breakfast. In which case, if you are not a careful planner, you have more than once left the room unexcused, with half an egg in your wind-pipe, or hurriedly placed a large mouthful of coffee in your napkin, in order to avoid spouting it across the table. For it would be useless to deny it, Cecil's as funny as a cat on the stage.

When we were married, everybody said, "How perfect! The wedding of the cap and the bells! The comic sock and mask!"

Cecil and I were of the same opinion. We were taken in along with everybody else. We

expected to go laughing through life like a couple of hyenas. We looked forward to a noisy felicity of aching jaws, bursting stays and flying suspender-buttons, brought to a riotous close by our simultaneously dying of laughter.

Well, the first two months were a circus. And neither of us could have told you for a new pair of red silk tights, which was the greater fun, to hold the hoop or to jump. We were partners, and we brought out each other's best, for the sake of the act.

We rushed from London to Paris, from Madrid to Rome, from Budapest to Prague. And we never lost a trick. We were really good, if I do say it. We never ordered a luncheon, or hailed a taxi, or bought a postage-stamp, but the air between us snapped with visible sparks. With no polishing or padding, and expurgating only the bad words, we could have sold our conversations at a dollar a syllable. There was a laugh in every line. And as for Cecil's remark about the Venus of Milo, and mine about the five-franc note, they were as priceless as they were unmarketable.

At the end of two months we came back to New York, and after hunting up a nice little apartment, which we furnished with a Hun-

garian bed-spread, a bit of Moorish porcelain, and a photograph of Fanny Brice, we proceeded to sprinkle Boeotia with salt. That is to say, we settled down to work, which for Cecil meant being funny once a day, and for me being twice as funny once a month.

For the next few weeks our conversations went something like this:

He: Got a match?

I: No. There's not a match in the house.

He: Well, we'll just have to rub a couple of gas-jets together.

I: Cecil, that's awfully cute. You must use that.

Or like this:

I: Cecil, dear I've made up my mind about one thing. If I ever have a son, I shall name him for his father.

He (*indulgently*): And supposing you have another son, what will you name him?

I: Why, for *his* father.

He: Well, of all the—Nancy, you ought to put that down. That's darned good.

Or like this:

I: That blonde woman we met in Vienna and I was so terribly jealous of, called to see you today. But you weren't in.

He: My sin has found me out.

I: Oh, Cecil, that's *too* lovely! If you don't use it, I shall.

As I said, this sort of thing went on for some weeks.

But after a while, when one of us would say something really good, the other would laugh, and then smile thoughtfully, as if fitting the remark into a possible setting. . .

And one morning there took place between us a conversation something like this:

I (*scanning the New York Sphere*): Why, Cecil, you old devil, you took this from me!

He: What's that?

I: Why, this thing about the fountains!

He: You're crazy! I said that myself. Don't you remember, we were standing by that fountain in the Luxembourg—

I: I remember perfectly well. And you were quoting me. I had said it myself weeks before in Rome. Don't you remember, we were standing by the Fountain of Trevi, and—(etc., etc.).

Then one day he caught *me* at it. At least, I never could make him believe that he didn't, and perhaps he was right.

You remember that little play I wrote—it came out in a magazine some time last year—

about a young married couple, called "For Winter, For Summer"?

Well, when Cecil saw the title he was furious. He swore it was his,—and perhaps it really was, I can't remember. Anyway, he had forgotten all about it, and would never have used it himself, as I told him. But all the same, he was furious.

And the very next day he took a perfectly stunning remark of mine, something I had said while we were quarreling about "For Winter, For Summer" and stuck it into the *Sphere*.

From that moment we began to watch each other as a mouse watches a cat. We made up our minds that we would never again risk anything really neat in the family circle. And the family circle began speedily to assume the angular proportions of an isosceles trapezoid.

Whenever in an unguarded moment one of us let slip a witticism,—and it was difficult not to, for we are both, as I have hinted before, screamingly funny—there would ensue a conversation something like this:

He: Now, that's mine. And it's darned good. And I'm going to use it tomorrow, before you get *your* teeth in it.

I: Well, really. I wonder that I ever achieved a paragraph, before I had your stuff to steal.

Or like this:

I: Now that's mine. And you needn't pretend you didn't have to laugh, because I saw you. And if you lay one spatulate finger on it, I'll cut your heart out.

He: Oh, come, now, Nan. Isn't that a bit stiff? You know once in a while I *do* have a cortical titillation all my own.

Well. Things have got to that point at last where for weeks on end, not a word is uttered in our house. You might think us a pair of undertakers instead of a pair of humorists. The silence between us is never broken save by a secret chuckle or a sudden slapping of the knee, followed by a covert scribbling.

As I remarked at the outset of this sordid narrative, by the time you read these words I shall have left my husband.

Divorce will be more difficult. Since I have no grounds for divorce. But I dare say I shall think of something.

As Henry the Eighth was so often heard to remark, "Where there's a will, there's a way."

KNOCK WOOD

KNOCK WOOD

"THANK God," says My Host, "I have always been entirely free from superstitions." Whereat he hastens to rap on the leg of his chair.

"I can say the same thing of myself," says the Man Who has Just Shaved his Moustache. "Still," and here, seizing a generous pinch of salt from a cellar which in his earnestness his cuff has over-turned, he tosses it over his head into the eye of the butler, "still, it is just as well to be on the safe side."

"You silly boys," cries the Only Woman in Black, and inserts the parenthesis of her pretty chromatic laugh, "you are both just as superstitious as you can be!"

"Not at all," objects My Host. "The only thing of that kind I do is to rap on wood. It's the only superstition I have. Besides, I only half believe it."

"Ah, yes," says the Woman Quite Without

Jewels (that is I, gentle reader; I never wear them; the chamber-maid could tell you why), "ah, yes, but half-beliefs are all we have today. We live by them. And we live for them. Though of course we would not die for them. All the martyrs were martyred years and years ago."

"True," agrees the Man Who was Called Up at the Last Moment.

"And at any rate," says the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie, "a man with one superstition is as superstitious as a man with ten. He has admitted the existence of fairies; and — whisht! — patter-patter-patter-patter-patter-patter—behold them in every cupboard of his house."

"But I think it amusing to have superstitions!" says the Woman who is Letting her Hair Grow. "How tiresome we all should be if we lived by logic alone! Of course, there's no *reason* for slicing an egg on the spinach,— but it's so pretty there."

"I do not agree with you," says the Woman who Uses no Powder, "that it would be tiresome if we lived by logic alone. It would be the creating of an entirely new social state, as

adventurous as air-motoring, as exciting as mathematics."

The other guests stir uneasily, and look to their hostess. But help comes from another quarter.

"Oh, *please* don't let's talk of mathematics!" cries the Woman whose Place is in her Neighbor's Home, with a voluptuous shudder. "Really, it's a subject that is almost indiscreet to bring up—there's sure to be at least *one* in the party who's tur-rying to forrgett."

"I'm interested in this superstitions business, myself," says the Man who Eats All of Everything. "Just what are they? I don't think I have any, myself."

"Oh, there are lots of 'em," says the Woman who is Letting her Hair Grow, "bad luck to walk under a ladder, bad luck to break a mirror, bad luck to look at the moon through glass, or over your left shoulder, bad luck to open an umbrella in the house, bad luck to sit thirteen at table,"—there is a general flutter, while everybody surreptitiously counts the number present at this particular table; everybody, that is to say, except My Hostess, who knows; the Woman whose Place is in her Neighbor's Home, who has already counted; the Woman who

Uses no Powder, who checks herself just in time; and the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie. "Oh, there are thousands of 'em," resumes the Woman who is Letting her Hair Grow. "I know them all. But I'm not a bit superstitious myself. I don't believe for a moment that thirteen is an unlucky number. I think it's a lucky number!"

"You are mistaken," says the Very Clever Woman, in her low, ironic voice to which everybody always listens. "There is a shrewd reason behind every popular taboo. For instance: that thirteen at table is an unlucky number there can be no possible doubt. Thirteen does not divide up into bridge, into tennis, into tango, or into twosing on the stairs. There is bound to be an odd guest prowling about somewhere in the offing, and, obviously, it's his hard luck.

"That it is taking one's life in one's hands to walk under a ladder there is no denying. Any pedestrian who commits this particular piece of folly well deserves to receive upon his somewhat undeveloped head an avalanche of shingles, a bucket of paste, or a Polish labourer.

"To look at the moon over one's left shoulder

or over one's right shoulder, for the matter of that, is prone to give one a cramp in the neck and should be avoided. And who, but the already bed-ridden and nigh to death, would look at the moon through glass, when there are so many rose arbors, deck chairs, park benches, balconies and canoes—to say nothing of the Roman Coliseum—from which she may so profitably be regarded?

"As for opening an umbrella in the house, this is dangerous only, of course, if you do it in somebody else's house. If you do it in your own house, and find the game worth a chandelier and a couple of electric light bulbs, that's your own business. The same thing is true of mirrors. If it is your neighbor's mirror that you break, you have to replace it. If it's your own, and you don't mind looking at yourself in estranged and distorted sections, then, obviously, no misfortune has occurred. A great deal depends, also, needless to say, on the size of the mirror. The kind they have in restaurants is frightfully expensive. I earnestly exhort every lady present never, while dining in a public place, to gesticulate too fervently with an empty champagne bottle."

"How about lighting three cigarettes with one match?" asks the Man who Looks like a Collar Advertisement. "If that's one of 'em, then I'm superstitious. I'd rather cut my throat than light three cigarettes with one match."

"A somewhat inconsistent preference," quietly interpolates the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie.

"To light three cigarettes with one match," replies the Very Clever Woman, "is certainly unlucky,—unlucky for the manufacturer of matches. And the wide-spread international cult of this particular quirk of extravagance hints of as fine a piece of circuitous, underground advertising as was ever devised by man.

"The point of my remarks is this: that many of our habits which are commonly supposed to have their root in superstition are, as a matter of fact, only evidences of somebody's far-seeing common sense."

"And of course," says the Man who is Entirely Bald, "almost anyone, especially a woman, would far rather be thought superstitious than be thought sensible."

The Woman who Uses no Powder opens her mouth, and closes it again.

"Common sense," he continues, "is a worthy but not an endearing quality. Why, what could be more helpless, flattering, and all round attractive than the small scream, the shudder, the clinging hands, the beseeching eyes so near one's own, of almost any young lady accosted by a black cat at a cross-roads?"

"Oh, but that's *lucky!*" cry several of the ladies at once, with shining eyes and shrill and eager voices. And the men smile, remembering why they married them.

"There are three kinds of people," says the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie. "There is the person who goes out of his way to avoid walking under a ladder; there is the person who goes out of his way to find a ladder to walk under, and there is the person who hasn't the faintest notion whether he is walking under a ladder or not.

"The lives of the first two, plainly, are governed by superstitions, one honouring them in the observance, the other in the breach. The life of the third as well, I am willing to swear,

is governed by superstitions—but by a different set of them.

"For the superstitions by which actually our noble and illustrious race is propelled and engineered are far other and more insidious than those already mentioned. They are insidious because people do not recognize them as superstitions at all.

"For instance, take postage stamps. Is there anybody present who has never steamed a postage stamped off an envelope, or spent half an hour painfully wresting apart two that are stoutly welded together?"

There is a moment of silence.

"I never have," says the Woman Quite Without Jewels. "But I have a drawer half full of dead envelopes with living stamps on them which some day, in some way, I earnestly hope to redeem."

"Of course you have," says the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie. "Everybody is superstitious about postage stamps. Now a postage stamp is a very useful thing in many ways; it is good for pasting a BUSY sign on a door, for sticking a loose leaf back in a notebook, for countless little homely, domestic tricks. A stamp is nothing but an insignificant scrap of

colored paper with an unusually good quality of mucilage on the back of it; among its other uses it may be employed to facilitate the progress of a letter through the mail. But to most of us a postage stamp is a sacred and terrible entity and not to be trifled with."

"I know," says the Only Woman in Black. "Once I ordered a green crême de menthe just to look at. I dislike the taste of it, but it's such a beautiful colour. Everybody tried to make me drink it; and when I wouldn't drink it, they tried to make me give it to them to drink. But I insisted on sending it away untouched and everybody thought me crazy."

"Quite so," says the Man with the Wrong Kind of Tie. "People have a superstition that everything has its own particular use, and that it's not to be put to any other use. They believe that all flowers are beautiful and all vegetables ugly, a pink carnation aesthetically preferable to a purple cabbage, the black desk-telephone with its long green stem necessarily less graceful than anything at all made out of glass in Bohemia. The older we grow, the less chance we have of really seeing a thing when we look at it; what we see is a composite of all the opinions we have ever formed about it. That,

of course, is experience. It is also, however, hardening of the æsthetic arteries.

"But there are certain superstitions which have influence over our economic and political, as well as over our æsthetic life. Take, for instance, the current and deep-rooted opinion that 'children are dear little things.'

"There are just about as many unpleasant, peevish, cowardly, self-seeking, low-browed, bullet-headed, shifty-eyed, frog-chinned, treacherous little liars in the world today," he continued, gazing mildly about the table, "as there will be unpleasant, peevish, etc., etc., etc., etc., etc., midde-sized liars in the world thirty years from today. A few more," he added sardonically.

"The only thing about a child which gives it superiority over an adult is that it can travel for half-fare.

"But of course if the world is to be continuously, or even—which God forbid!—increasingly well populated it is important that people should look upon children as dear little things. Otherwise the temptation might conceivably become criminally great, after a few months of watchful feeding and rearing to cut off summarily, in the interest of civilization,

the next generation's perfectly legitimate quota of invalids, idiots, and first-class second-story men.

"Now consider, if you please, the fatuous and scarcely less common credo that 'old age is beautiful.' Old age is intrinsically more beautiful than youth only if ashes are intrinsically more beautiful than fire. Old people are gentle and forbearing for one of three reasons: because it is to their advantage to be gentle and forbearing; because they are too helpless to be otherwise, or because they have always had gentleness and forbearance in their natures.

"There are people in our acquaintance today who are hot-tempered, witty, unconventional, determined, and passionate. Subtract from these qualities the fire which is their motive force. In thirty years these same people will be irritable, silly, untidy, pig-headed and lewd.

"For you may say what you will, an old man is his own ashes. As the twig was bent, so the tree grew, so the log burned, and so the ashes lie. And nothing is in the ashes that was not in the log, saving the perfectly negative qualities of pallor, impotence, and chill."

"There is a shifting and a stirring about the table. The guests are uneasy; they do not

know precisely why. But they vaguely suspect in their midst the obscene presence of Poetry.

"Oh, *please* don't let's talk of old age!" cries the Woman Whose Place is in her Neighbor's Home. "If there's anything in the world more distressing to contemplate than one's past, it is one's future!"

Everybody smiles gratefully. My Hostess rises. We twitch at our chiffons, adjust our shoulder-straps and slink fawning from the room.

TEA FOR THE MUSE

TEA FOR THE MUSE

Mrs. Lang-Jennings Gives a Four-to-Six in Honor of the Distinguished Poet

PERSONS: Bertha Lang-Jennings
Angela, her daughter, aged fourteen
Male and Female Guests
Cecil Payne, a Poet

SCENE: *A very crowded room, smelling of roses, denatured alcohol and sandwiches, and steaming like a laundry. Large private exhibition of rare and priceless linens, laces, china, silver, gowns, hats, jewels, etc. Mrs. Howard, a tall, serious young woman with fine hair, reclines angularly upon the piano bench. On a small sofa in the corner Miss Lowry, a small, frivolous young woman with a permanent wave, pursues an afternoon flirtation with Mrs. Howard's husband. Squeezed side by side upon a divan together, Mrs. Blackburn, Mrs. Loomis, Miss Dunning and Miss Hutton, each endeavouring to free her elbows and assert*

her personality. Seated in an armchair, with knees comfortably spread apart, Mrs. Crane, a large, middle-aged woman, dressed in black cloth and wearing lisle stockings, quite obviously the wealthiest person present. Mr. Cummings leans against the mantel-piece, from which he buffets his tea and cakes. Miss Lenox, who once spent a fortnight in Japan, kneels on a cushion before the fireplace; her feet have mercifully gone to sleep long ago, so they are no longer conscious that she is sitting on them. Other guests strewn about.

Under a drooping palm near the divan, dressed in a soft grey shirt, brown corduroy trousers and jacket, a batiked tie and army boots, sits Mr. Payne, the poet. He is very uncomfortable. He has been holding his empty cup in his hands for ten minutes, unable to nerve himself to rise and set it down; he is flushingly conscious of the protruding of the two volumes of verse from his pocket; his stomach is restless under its unfamiliar libation, and the conversation is full of lulls. Moreover, he has just had a haircut, and the back of his neck is cold.

Discovered standing at the rise of the curtain, Mrs. Lang-Jennings, worrying her pearls

and addressing the multitude in a saccharine baritone.

Mrs. Lang-Jennings: Ladies and gentlemen, this charming person on my left about whom you have all been wondering is Mr. Cecil Payne, the poet. (*Murmurs of "Oh", "Ah", "Indeed", "How interesting", etc.*) Mr. Payne, as doubtless you all know, is the author of those two delightful volumes of verse—er—(*consults slip of paper in her hand*)—*Cakes and Ale*, and *An Archer in Arcady*. (*Murmurs of "Oh, yes", "Ah, yes", "Indeed", "How interesting", etc.*) I'm sure we shall all be delighted to hear Mr. Payne read us a few of his own delightful verses. (*Pleasant patter of pudgy palms.*)

Mrs. Crane (*in a loud, rough voice*): I've bought your books, Mr. Payne, both of 'em. I buy every book of verse that comes out. I don't read 'em, because I don't like poetry. But I buy 'em, because I believe that art should be encouraged.

Miss Hutton (*in a sweet, twittering voice, viciously freeing her elbows*): Do tell me, Mr. Payne, I've always wanted to know: do you

write from inspiration, or do you work over them?

MRS. LOOMIS (*surging forward suddenly on the divan and clasping her arms about her knees*): Oh, Mr. Payne, how *do* you do it? I've read your charming book *Beer and Skittles* from beginning to end, and I think it's the most *marvellous* thing! It's the most marvellous thing to me the way people write poetry! *I* couldn't do it to save my life, I'm *sure* I couldn't!

MRS. TEN EYCK (*a slender, highly-combustible woman in a close-fitting hat and a treacherous veil, nervously fondling the long nose of a handsome white wolf-hound*): I hope you won't mind Boris, Mr. Payne. It makes him rather restless when people sing or read aloud or anything, but if he goes over to you, just let him lick your hand, and it will be *quite* all right.

MRS. SAILER (*a plump woman, cluckingly*): This is a red-letter day for me, Mr. Payne. I've looked forward for a week to hearing you this afternoon. I adore poetry. We are all very poetical in my family. My little girl has already gotten a silver badge in *St. Nicholas* for a poem called *Honor*, and she's *only* fif-

teen. If it wouldn't bore you, I'd *adore* to show you some of her things and see what you think of them. Just read that, if you don't mind, Mr. Payne. I'm sure you'll be impressed by it. She's only—

(*Enter abruptly, washed in on a wave of scent, Miss Ballard, an extremely beautiful girl —brown eyes, golden hair, perfect teeth, long lashes, everything.*)

Miss Ballard (*in a shrill, Indianapolis voice, very rapidly*): Oh, Bertha, darling, I've been forty minutes getting here and it's the greatest wonder I ever got here at all, isn't it, my love? (*This last to a skinny and microscopic black dog, which she now drags out of her muff by the tail.*)

All: Why, whatever happened? Do tell us! How dreadful!

Miss Ballard (*sinking into a chair and fanning herself with a concert program*): I am exhausted! *Is* there any tea left? The moment my eye falls on you, Teresa Blackburn, I have a horrid feeling there's not a drop of tea left!

Mrs. Blackburn: It's all right, darling. I filled up at Dolly's before I came.

Mrs. Lang-Jennings: Teresa! And you

dare say that in my presence! What's the matter with *my* tea?

MRS. BLACKBURN: Nothing, dear,—

MISS LENOX (*interjecting*): It's the best tea this side of Tokio!

MRS. BLACKBURN: But I'm not one of these people who can wait for the best. I always take the first, for fear it should be the last.

MISS DUNNING (*to Miss Hutton, in a whisper*): As in the case of her husband, my dear.

MISS HUTTON (*to Miss Dunning, in a whisper*): Obviously.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS (*to Miss Ballard*): Here is your tea, poor darling, and just as you like it, three lumps and lemon. And now *do* tell us what happened!

ANGELA: *That* isn't the way she likes it, mummie! She likes it no lumps and cream, don't you, Miss Ballard?

MISS BALLARD: Why—er—yes—really, if you don't mind.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: Oh, I'm *so* sorry! I *am* losing my memory. I said to Will this morning that I was losing my memory, and he said—there, dear, (*to Miss Ballard*) now, fix it up yourself, then it'll be right,—he said, "I congratulate you."

(*A ripple of delicate and malicious laughter from the group.*)

Miss Dunning (*to Miss Ballard*): Connie, be an angel and throw me a cigarette.

Mr. Cummings: *I* beg your pardon. Have one of mine.

Miss Dunning: Thanks very much, but I really prefer the kind Connie smokes. You may catch it for me if you like. Thanks. Thanks *so* much, darling. I don't know *why* I never think to get some of this kind for myself!

Angela: It's Mrs. Raeburn who takes it three lumps and lemon, mummie.

Mrs. Lang-Jennings: Yes, yes, dear.

Angela: And she's not here. Don't you wish now you'd asked her?

Mrs. Lang-Jennings: Angela,—*hush!*

Angela: I'll drink it, though, if nobody else is going to. It's too bad to waste it.

Miss Ballard: I saw Mrs. Raeburn at the Biltmore this morning, having break—er—having luncheon with Mr. Dinwiddie. She was looking awful.

Mrs. Lang-Jennings (*absently*): Ah, really?—Angela, darling, run upstairs and see

if mother left her mauve bead bag on the dressing-table or by the telephone.

ANGELA: Oh, dear. Well, all right. But if you've left anything else, do tell me right now. I *hate* being sent upstairs all the time. (*Mrs. Lang-Jennings focuses upon her daughter a clear-grey look, and Angela departs.*)

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS (*drawing a handkerchief from a mauve bead bag which lies in her lap and thoughtfully polishing a bit of jam from her thumb-nail*): Yes, she's *not* looking her best these days.

MISS BALLARD: She was wearing blue,—a very difficult colour, and especially in the morning.

MRS. TEN EYCK: He is *very* charming, Dinwiddie. I knew him in Paris.

MRS. LOOMIS: Really? All sorts of people seem to have known Mr. Dinwiddie in Paris! It's most extraordinary!

(*Enter Miss Ainsworth and Mr. Dallas, both very smart—distinct additions to the gathering.*)

MISS AINSWORTH: If you want to know why I'm late, ask Dallie. It's all his fault. Isn't it, Dallie?

MR. DALLAS: It is. 'Lo, Bertie.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS (*putting up her cheek to be kissed*): My, how sweet you smell. What is it?

MR. DALLAS: Now, how in the world should I know? (*General laughter.*)

MISS LENOX (*to Miss Ainsworth*): What is it, Babs?

(*Enter Angela, out of breath.*)

ANGELA: It's not there. But I brought you down your pink shawl and your smelling-salts and your address-book and your bisurated magnesia, in case you should want any of them. Why, *there's* your bead bag!

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: Yes, dear, thank you. Mother found it.

MR. DALLAS: I'm hungry as a wolf. Any sandwiches left?

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: Why, I—er—

MRS. BLACKBURN: Yes, here's one. A nut one, too.

MISS BALLARD: Help! That's mine!

MRS. BLACKBURN: Oh, I'm sorry. But don't you want to give it to Dallie? He's *so* hungry.

MISS BALLARD: I *do* not! What, after he cut a date with me to go to—

MR. DALLAS (*going over to her and clasping*

her hands): Connie, you beautiful thing, you would forgive me if you knew the truth.

MISS BALLARD: I'm not so sure about that. But *I'm* willing to listen to the truth. Haven't heard any for a long time.

EVERYBODY: The truth! The truth!

MR. DALLAS: The truth is, I avoid you purposely, Connie. Daren't trust myself with you. 'Fraid I'll be unfaithful to Babs. (*General laughter.*)

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: Do have some tea, Mrs. Crane.

MRS. CRANE (*in a loud, rough voice*): Thank you, Bertha. Just a bit.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS (*pouring*): Say when.

MRS. CRANE (*in a loud, rough voice*): When!

MISS LENOX: Has anybody seen Greggie since he got back?

MRS. TEN EYCK: Yes, I have.

MISS AINSWORTH: I have, too.

MISS BALLARD: So have I.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: You seem to be the only one who hasn't, Violet. Do have some tea, Miss Hutton.

MISS HUTTON: No, thank you. I must be

going. I promised Aunt Ellen to pick her up in twenty minutes.

MISS DUNNING: Where'd you leave her, Izzy?

MISS HUTTON: At the dentist's. Goodby, Teresa, dear. See you Wednesday. It *is* Wednesday, isn't it?

MRS. BLACKBURN: Yes, darling,—seven-thirty.

MISS AINSWORTH: Why, you told me seven!

MRS. BLACKBURN: Oh, but darling, you're *always* half an hour late!

MRS. LOOMIS (*rising*): I must go, too. I left Mister Einstein checked at the Plaza, and he'll be chewing up everybody's furs.

MRS. HOWARD: I must go, too. Come, John.

MRS. LANG-JENNINGS: What, you're not *all* going?

ANGELA (*in a loud whisper*): Hush, mother! It's just as well. Dinner's early to-night, you know!

(*Guests ooze out severally, chattering and lying. Exit Mrs. Lang-Jennings in the direction of the dining-room; Angela upstairs. The drawing-room is left empty. Pause.*

There now emerges furtively from under the

divan, looking very aged and shaken, with wild eyes and working mouth, Mr. Payne, the poet. He glares hastily about the room, steps to the table, stuffs his pockets clumsily with Mrs. Lang-Jennings' monogrammed cigarettes, and exits, sobbing.)

ROLLS AND SALT

ROLLS AND SALT

PHILIP: any fairly tall, dark-complexioned, very good-looking young man, just now a little preoccupied, who has been married six months to

Lucile: any fairly small, rather blonde, very pretty young woman, just now a little restless.

Place: The dining-room of any fashionable hotel.

Time: Quarter to eight o'clock of any evening.

She: Philip, will you please pass me a roll? —You have the most annoying habit of keeping all the rolls on your side of the table. And you know perfectly well that, whenever I reach for things in this dress, I get my sleeve in the Sauce Béarnaise.

He: I beg your pardon, my love. I was thinking of something else.

She: Too obviously. I do wish, Philip, that, at least when we are dining out, you would

show me some slight attention. I don't mind being neglected, but I hate to *look* neglected.

He: Is this a quarrel?

She: No, it is not a quarrel. I have no desire to quarrel with you, Philip. Whenever you quarrel you lose your English accent.

He (*a little touched, but nonchalant*): I say, old dear, will you have a roll?

She: Thank you.

He: And, in exchange, would you mind taking your hand-bag off the salt for a moment.

She (*flushing*): Oh, I'm sorry! . . . . Phil, *please* don't salt the meat before you taste it! If you knew how that irritates me! It is one of the six most irritating things you do!

He (*pleasantly, attacking his dinner*): Indeed? And what are the others?

She: Never mind.

He (*courteously*): Ah, but yes. Tell me.

She (*quite obviously struggling with sweet temptation*): Oh, no, my dear. Please don't ask me to. We'll just get to quarreling.

He (*quite amiably*): Well, that's what you're after.

She: I am not!

He: Oh, yes you are.

She: Oh, very well, then! Since you insist. But remember, you asked me to do it.

There ensues an interval of taut silence.

He (*looking at her with amusement*): Well?

She: Well, then,—you *never* notice what I am wearing, that's one thing! One might as well dress for one's grandfather!

He: Why, Lu, isn't that just a little bit unfair? I distinctly remember saying, this very evening, when I was helping you into your coat, "What a pretty new dress, my dear!"

She (*furiously*): It's *not* a new dress! And you ought to know it's not! I've had it two years. It's just been made shorter and had the sleeves changed! A new dress!

He: Well, I'm sorry. You always look lovely to me, no matter what you wear, that's the truth of it. And it needn't make you so angry.

She: Well, it does. And that's why I'm always making you take me to dinner to places where there are sure to be people I know. So that *somebody'll* appreciate me!

He: Well, go on.

She (*belligerently*): I will. This is something else on the same plan, and they both come

right down to the fact that what you want is your dinner, and not to be dining out with me. You're always and forever saying, when I'm not *nearly* ready, "Oh, come on,—you look all right!"—and it makes me perfectly furious! You may as well know it.

He (*very gently*): And then?

She (*a little frightened, but persistent*): Then—then you're forever kissing me in railway stations, and doing things like that. You have no discretion. Besides, you don't do it because you want to kiss me. All the time your mind is on whether or not the train will be late and make you miss your connections, and if you can get an accommodation in the chair-car. You don't really want to kiss me at all. You just do it to get one more thing attended to and out of the way. I know.

He: Ah, but my dear Lucile—

She: No, this is my turn. You may have yours later (*with increasing venom and mounting eloquence*). And please don't sit smiling at your fingers all the time I'm talking, thinking up some flabby cynicism with which to swat me the minute I pause for breath!

He (*still more gently*): Go on. Go on.

She (*recklessly*): All right! Next to the

ones already mentioned, your most abominable trait is that of nudging my arm every time we cross a street, in a feeble and preoccupied symbolism of hoisting me up the curbings. I'm not a cripple,—and if I were, I'd do much better to stand on the curb and yodel to a policeman than rely upon the absent-minded and desultory personal conduction of such an escort as you!

He (*after a pause*): Is that all?

She (*sullenly*): It's all I think of at the moment. May I have a roll?

He: What, another?

She: Phil, that's rude!

He: Not at all, my dear. I am only glad that you have an appetite.

She: And that's another irritating thing you do.

He: What?

She: Make remarks about my having an appetite.

He: But you *have* an appetite!

She: I have several. But it's not necessary to discuss them.

He: Take care—you'll have your sleeve in the butter.

She: Thank you.

There is a silence for some moments. They look studiously away from each other, he with his jaw slightly protruding, she with drooping eyelids and her chin in the air.

She (*after one timorous and one remorseful glance in his direction, to which he is apparently oblivious*): Phil, I think I'm going to cry.

He (*instantly and vehemently concerned*): My Lord, Lu, don't! See here,—eat your dinner! Lu, for heaven's sake! Shall we go?

She (*her eyes wide open and ominously brilliant*): No—no—I'll be all right in a minute —only—oh, Phil, all of a sudden I felt so cruel! *Was* I cruel?

He: Nonsense, you couldn't be cruel if you wanted to. Come, eat your dinner, darling. To please Phil. If you don't stop, I shall kiss you, right here. I can't stand it. I never get used to seeing you cry. It makes you look so helpless, it nearly kills me.—There, that's better.

She (*tremulously inserting her fork into her filet mignon and sawing at it without assurance*): Oh, Phil, you're so sweet! Why do I say such dreadful things to you when I love you so?

He (*fervently*): God knows.

She (*brightly*): Phil, dear, listen. Now, I'll tell you the six *nice* things about you. Shall I?

He (*indulgently*): All right, dear,—if you wish.

She: First of all, you never boast of how much liquor you can drink without becoming intoxicated. I can't *bear* that. Then, you never recite the "Spell of the Yukon" to me. And so many people have! I listened carefully, after we married, fearfully, for weeks, but you never did. And, when you proposed to me you did not do so by saying that you wanted to be the father of my child. And then, you never arrange matches in squares on the table-cloth, with the enthusiastic suggestion that I try to do something with them without doing something else. And you never break off in the middle of a story with the remark, "No, I'm afraid it's a little bit too rough." And you don't wear a derby hat.

He: I'd no idea I was possessed of so many sterling attributes. You've quite put me in a good humor. Won't you have some dessert?

She (*uncertainly*): No, I think not. I'm not very hungry. Philip, *please* don't laugh!

He: My love, I'm not laughing. I'm disguising a yawn.

She: Oh,—are you so bored?

He (*ingenuously*)*:* Yes. It always bores me to talk about myself. Let us talk about you.

She (*eagerly*)*:* Very well! Tell me what *I* do that *you* hate.

He: Nothing. You're perfect. We will discuss two or three of your perfections.

She (*with enthusiasm*)*:* All right!

He: First of all, you are by far the most sensible woman in my acquaintance—

She: Why, Philip, I am no such thing! How can you!

He: Then, of course, you have in common with most of the members of your sex—beauty, wit, gentleness—

She: Now, really, Philip, you know perfectly well that many women are very ugly, and most of them are stupid! Besides, I'm *not* gentle!

He: I take it all back. I will begin again. You have nothing whatever in common with other women. You are entirely different. In fact, sometimes when I am talking with you, discussing matters concerning which most women are utterly uninformed,—duck-shoot-

ing, politics, craps—I find myself under the impression that I am talking with another man.

She (*flattered*): Yes?

He: Yes. And sometimes, even when I am sitting alone with you, my arm about your waist, your head on my shoulder, the warmth of our friendship comes over me in a great wave, and I almost forget that you are a woman, in the sweetness of our perfect companionship.

She (*doubtfully*): Yes?—Oh, Philip, don't you love me any more?

He: Lucile, I adore you. . . . Of course, there are annoying little things—

She (*very eagerly*): What things? Tell me!

He: Oh, no, dear. I was only teasing.

She: You were not, Phil, and you know it. You were in earnest. Tell me—it's only fair—tell me the dreadful things *I* do.

He: Well, dear—you *will* pick threads off me in public places. And it's so—so proprietary.

She: But, sweetheart, I only do it because I am proud of you, and want everybody to know you're mine. You shouldn't mind that.

He: Well, now that we're about it, you

have one really irritating habit. Almost invariably, twenty minutes after you have ordered some special dish to be prepared for you at a restaurant, you have a sudden inspiration to change your order for something else. And you can't *do* those things, Lu,—at least, not night after night.

She (*bitterly*): Go on.

He (*warming to his subject*): Then, you behave so childishly when we're crossing an avenue through the traffic, darting ahead and almost throwing yourself under a truck, or scuttling along in a breathless rush when there's nothing within a block of you. But then, all women do that.

She (*in a tragic voice*): I'm sorry, Philip, that I shame you in public places.

(*There is a sour pause.*)

He: These are just little things, Lucile. In the big things you are wonderful. For instance: you have never been known to say, "How just like a man"; you rouge incomparably well, so well that it is necessary to observe the kind of shoes you wear, in order to be sure that you rouge at all; and your digestion is excellent, which augurs that you will never nag me. You never scold the waiter,

make remarks about the telephone service or the stupidity of Sunday afternoon in town, or the fact that I enjoy the comic section; and you never ask me with wide-eyed innocence why I suppose everybody is staring at you.

She (*with a sudden sally of charm*): I must be a terribly nice person.

He: You are. (*He gazes into her eyes a moment.*) You are. Er—but of that more anon. Er—to continue: you always ask me to give up for your sake the thing I was just about to give up anyway. You dislike all beverages that come through a straw. And your relatives all live in California.

She: Oh, Philip, that's brutal of you!

He: It's you who are sentimental.

She: Well, perhaps it's just as well for you that I am!

He: And just what do you mean by that?

She: All right, then, I mean that you're brutal and conceited and cynical and clumsy and tiresome and selfish and coarse; and if I weren't so hopelessly in love with you I'd never speak to you again!

He (*delicately*): Ah! And now permit me, compliment aside, to enumerate your own lasting charms. As I said before, you are perfect.

You are sentimental, indolent, cruel, timid, extravagant, untruthful and vain,—in other words, perfect.

She (*emotionally*): Oh, Philip,—you do love me, don't you?

He: I do . . . Check, please!

HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH GOOD

HOW TO BE HAPPY THOUGH GOOD

AS a child I was early turned from the path of righteousness by the unfortunate remark once let drop in my presence by my mother that virtue is its own reward. Hitherto I had supposed that if I were being good it was for some decent and intelligible purpose. If I wrote to grandmother, it was with the definite understanding, so I thought, between myself and my environment, that I was to get a train of cars for Christmas, or a boat with *Vacation* painted about its prow; and none of your girl-toys, either,—a train capable of doing physical violence to the person and the cargo of any tea-wagon that might get across its track, and a boat that would take the kitten for a nice long sail. Fancy my consternation, therefore, when it was thus by chance brought home to me that if I wrote to grandmother it was presumably in order that I might receive a letter from grandmother in return!

With Virtue I was well acquainted. It was

a soft pink dragon with upturned blue eyes, a sugary voice, and quantities of yellow hair done up in curl-rags. It had an intricate and uncomfortable apparatus constructed of brass wires on its upper front teeth, which it never on any account removed and left in the hammock. There was an apron over its tummy, with no jam-stains on it. On its hind feet were two exceedingly large and shiny rubbers; of its front feet the right was endlessly engaged in performing do-re-mi-thumb-sol-la-si-do on a pure-white piano, while the other rhythmically assaulted the back of its neck with a bath-sponge (the left having not the remotest idea what the right was doing); its four fat legs were warmly encased in rough white woolen underclothing, somewhat large at the wrists and ankles. Affixed to its shoulder-blades were two very heavy and unwieldy wings, composed exclusively of red, blue and white feathers; and fastened behind its head was a shiny golden thing shaped like a Victrola record.

I had always supposed that if one fed the dragon twice a day with tooth-paste, which was its favourite aliment, recited to it one's arithmetic lesson, which was what it loved

more than all the world to hear, and tickled its flabby pink back with a neatly sharpened pencil, some afternoon it would go smilingly to sleep, and one could sneak around into the enchanted garden, where cherries and caramels and pickled cucumbers grew riotously on the lowest boughs, and the highest boughs were bare of all save leaves.

But no such thing! Here was I wasting my youth in good deeds that would get me nowhere. Morning after morning of perspiring application to my joggafy; the beautiful afternoons dissipated in sitting on the porch, taking out long stitches and trying to put in short ones; or going for a walk with my governess, who preferred the tiresome road to the lovely ditch, and insisted on addressing me in a language which was not my own; evening after evening embittered by optimistic juvenile literature,—as if it were not bad enough to have to be good, without having to read about being good!—; and the wonderful night all lost in hateful sleep. And in the end, what was I to receive for my pains?—Virtue. That is to say, the Dragon.

Not I!

You have heard the little story of the little

girl who saved up all her little pennies in her little bank and, when the little bank was as full as a little tick, her mother opened it and bought her a great big bottle of cod-liver oil? Well, that was some other little girl. Long before I had a penny to my name I had scented the perfidy and hypocrisy of the world about me, and laid my little plans.

"Virtue is its own reward," my mother had said. And from that moment dates my flying descent down the ice-paved boulevard of wilful misdoing.

I became unmanageable. I would no longer eat my cereal. It occurred to me for the first time that I had always hated it. I would no longer line my mind with the down and cotton-batting of *Dolly Dimples* and *Rollo on the Atlantic*. One morning I hid for hours under my mother's bed, reading the *Kreutzer Sonata*, which fascinated me strangely; and when my mother found me and took the book away and set me to sewing, I sewed my sewing into the arm of my father's chair.

That afternoon I refused to accompany my governess on the daily excursion. They tried to persuade me. I was firm. They sought

to reason with me. I threw myself upon the floor and yelled. They seized my feet and endeavoured to drag me forth into the healthful out-of-doors. I grabbed the piano-lamp by its fragile base and succeeded in taking it with me. My mother was filled with consternation. She rushed to the telephone. And soon, much to my disgust, there entered the room the family doctor. He took me affectionately upon his knee; I kicked him in the leg. When he had taken my pulse, with some difficulty, he requested that I put out my tongue. I did so, to its full length and with unnecessary enthusiasm. Whereupon he unceremoniously inverted me and administered to my person an efficient and hearty spanking.

It had seemed to me, naturally enough, that if indeed virtue were its own reward, then, conversely, the reward of sin must be the coveted privilege of sinning as much as one liked. But I was mistaken. My mother had deceived me. Virtue was not its own reward. Or if it were, it was the reward of other things as well. For every hour sweetly spent in wickedness I was inevitably forced to devote at least two hours to the unattractive industries

of the blest. Virtue, it was all too plain, was the reward of vice.

In my perplexity I began to watch my elders for some hint as to conduct. They had lived a long time. It was unreasonable to suppose that they had had no pleasure at all in their lives. How did they go about getting it?

I soon became aware of many little things that interested me greatly. For instance, if my father sent roses to my mother on Saturday, I observed that on Sunday he went fishing. If my governess suggested that we visit the soda-fountain in order that I might have an ice-cream, I observed that once there she made away with two ice-creams and a soda herself. If my elder brother accompanied my mother to church, I remembered that the preceding night I had heard him come creeping up the stairs in his stocking feet. It was simple enough. If you were good, it was either because you had just been bad, or were about to be. *Being bad* being synonymous in my mind, and not without reason, with doing what one wished.

I changed my tactics. I did not become good, for that would have gained me nothing, but I became tractable. I made it possible for

people to put in my way small considerations, such as sweets, chocolate-covered, even, on occasion, books without Morals, afternoons in town at the Hippodrome, in unregenerate exchange for half-hours at the piano, the exports of Brazil, and generally speaking, a little peace and quiet in the home.

To this day I have changed but little. I am held to be a most exemplary person. And so I am, for long periods of time. Sometimes for weeks on end I am so good that it sickens me. For I have learned that it is more beautiful to be unselfish than to be selfish, except as regards things which one wants. I was long ago forced to admit that not all my tastes are vicious, nor all my desires necessarily at war with the social weal. I do not prefer evil to good. I simply prefer the things that I prefer to the things that I do not prefer. And I go about getting them, with no flourish of trumpets or fanfare of drums, but with a guile and suavity worthy of a nobler cause.

"I'm afraid there isn't room for everybody in the car," says my hostess, in distress.

"I will stay behind," I suggest, prettily. "I really wouldn't mind at all."

"Oh, no, indeed! I couldn't think of letting you do that!" cries my hostess, aghast, only too glad to take me at my word, but making the usual pretense of casting about for another way to do the thing. "Maybe we can all squeeze in. Though—"

"Nonsense," I retort. "It would just make everybody uncomfortable. It doesn't matter at all, really. No—don't say a word—it's all settled. Goodbye! Have a good time! Goodbye!"

Whereupon I go back to the hammock, and pick up my novel with a happy sigh. I loathe motoring.

"Poor Dicky," says my hostess another day, "he is so keen to go to the movies this afternoon. But it's Celestine's half-day out, and Fanchette has gone to the zoo with Chloe. There's nobody to take him. It's one of those dreadful old Charlie Chaplin pictures."

"I'll take him," say I, with a charming gesture drawing the little boy to my side,—a detestable little boy.

"Oh, no, I couldn't *think* of it!" cries my hostess as before. "I know how you hate the motion pictures. I've heard you say. It's

terribly sweet of you. But I couldn't think of it. Come, Dicky."

"Nonsense," I reprove her, gaily. "Dicky and I are going to the movies. Aren't we, Dicky?"

And off we go, wafted on a holy wind of patient sacrifice.

I adore Charlie Chaplin.

But, on the other hand: let the stumbling, the philosophic, the large-footed, come up to me and beg me for a dance.

"What?" I cry, "after you cut me dead on the street the other afternoon? I should say not. Never again."

Or supposing you send me a note inviting me to tea to meet your sister-in-law who has just come East. I do not receive that note. The mail service is terrible.

Or supposing you think to pin me down by getting at me in person on the telephone.

"To-morrow night?" I gurgle, happily, "Oh, I should just adore to! Oh, but wait a minute —to-morrow night, is that Wednesday?—I'm afraid I—I'll see what I can do. I'll call you up."

And in half an hour my maid calls you up, and tells you that I am very sorry.

So it is that I live courted, and shall die lamented.

Virtue, of course, as we all very well know, is not an end in itself, but merely a means to an end. If you are good, it is either because you want something you won't get if you are bad, or don't want something you will get if you are bad,—or are afraid you'll get. Everyone knows that. It is as simple as anything. A child can use it. And invariably does.

But one must not make the mistake of deducing from this formula that all vice is pleasant and all virtue dull. No. Do what you like. Ride over everybody, so that you do not ride rough-shod. Be ruthless, but don't be rude. Be naughty, but done be noisy. Sin without ostentation. But oh, gentle reader, on those rare occasions when pleasure and virtue coincide, then, for the love of Society, that cross-eyed, harassed mother of chicks that swim! —come out of hiding, seize a trumpet and a big silk flag, and ride through the city on a waltzing elephant.

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

HERE COMES THE BRIDE

The Tragedy of a Fashionable Wedding in Ten Farces

TIME: The Present.
Place: New York.

Farce I

(*Nine Days before the Wedding*)

A room strewn with pins, scissors, thimbles, tape-measures, odd parts of tissue-paper patterns, and slivers of crêpe de chine. On a slightly elevated platform the Bride, with reddened eyes and dilated nostrils, revolving slowly. The wedding-gown is being altered again.

Bride (*coming to an abrupt standstill and sneeringly regarding her reflection in a long mirror, with fury*): It's a sight,—there! I won't wear it! It's disgusting! Look at those gathers! Wedding-gown!—it looks more like a—

Bride's Mother: Katharine, that will do.

BRIDE: Oh, but, mother, *look* at it!

BRIDE'S MOTHER: I am looking at it, darling. It is very pretty. If it makes you look a little plumper than usual, that's a good fault.

BRIDE (*with a howl of despair*): There! That settles it! Take it off, please,—ugh!

MAID OF HONOUR: If you'd just powder your nose, you know, Kay, you'd find the thing would fit you heaps better. It's immoral to try on a dress without first powdering your nose.

BRIDE: I did powder my nose, Agatha Schuyler, and you know it perfectly well! I borrowed your puff!

MAID OF HONOUR: Well, perhaps you did; but you've been bawling since then, and—

BRIDE: Oh, Aggie, how *can* you be so *cruel*! When you know how nervous I am! *Bawling!* Why, I can't *believe* it! My *own sister*! (*Bride bursts into tears.*)

BRIDE'S MOTHER (*wearily*): There, Agatha. Now I hope you're satisfied.

MAID OF HONOUR: I didn't mean to make her cry, honestly, mother. You can't look at her lately but she has a fit. I'm sorry, Kay. I didn't mean to— (*Maid of Honour approaches Bride pacifically.*)

BRIDE (*kicking Maid of Honour in the stomach*): Get *out*! Don't you *touch* me! I *mean* it! If you put a finger on me I'll go crazy! Aaaaoooouuuu! (*Bride has hysterics.*)

BRIDE'S MOTHER (*without conviction, approaching Bride pacifically*): Katharine. Now that will do. Stop it. Stop it, I tell you.

BRIDE (*gasping and screaming*): Oh, I wish I were dead! I wish I were dead!

MAID OF HONOUR (*with disgust*): Aw, come on, Kay, pull yourself together. Don't be a baby.

BRIDE (*furiously*): Oh, *Agatha*! Mind your *business*! Whose funeral is this wedding, anyhow?

BRIDE'S MOTHER: Katharine, if you don't stop this at once, I wash my hands of the whole affair. Put your arms back into those sleeves. (*Bride is about to obey.*)

MAID OF HONOUR: Come on, Kay. Do as mother tells you.

BRIDE (*apoplectically, grabbing up a pair of shears*): Will you shut up, or won't you?

BRIDE'S MOTHER (*in a low voice*): Agatha, you'd better go out, I think.

MAID OF HONOUR (*in a high voice*): Don't worry! I'm going! (*She goes.*)

BRIDE'S MOTHER: Now, darling. Try it once again. Please do, dear,—for mother.

(*Bride gets back into gown. Dressmaker kneels before her with a mouthful of pins. Several moments pass. Bride yawns.*)

BRIDE'S MOTHER (*anxiously*): Anything the matter, dear?

BRIDE (*in a small voice, by way of negation*): Huh-uh.

(*Several moments pass. Bride sways slightly.*)

BRIDE'S MOTHER: Don't you think you'd better get down, dear?

BRIDE: Huh-uh.

(*Several moments pass. Bride licks her lips, swallows four times, and faints.*)

FARCE II

(*Eight Days before the Wedding*)

A room glittering with salad-forks, sugar-tongs, luncheon-napkins, water-jugs, tea-sets, coffee-sets, nut-sets, carving-sets, toast-racks, andirons, calling-cards, packing-straw, etc. Bride standing with hands on hips in attitude of exasperated despair.

BRIDE: *Who* mixed these cards all up like this?

MAID OF HONOUR: Don't look at *me!* *I* haven't touched your old cards! Maybe Anna did it when she was dusting.

BRIDE: Oh, for Heaven's sake! Why can't anybody ever let anything alone! I had them arranged *exactly* as I wanted them—one pile for the glass people, one for the silver people, one for the china people—oh, *why* can't people mind their own business! Now I haven't the *faintest* notion who sent me what! I shall just as likely as not be gushing all over Aunt Prudence for the cocktail-shaker she sent me, and writing Skinny how sweet it was of him to think of the Reader's Bible!

MAID OF HONOUR: It *is* a shame, Kay, darling. (*She sighs.*) People really ought to write on their cards what it is they're sending, how much it cost, and where you can get it changed.

BRIDE (*sitting down in a heap of excelsior*): Oh, it's too discouraging! First there were the invitations, all spelled with an *e* instead of an *a*. Then Babs *refused* to wear yellow. And now—oh, I *don't* know what I'm going to do! I haven't the *faintest* idea who sent me that samovar, have you? Or those champagne glasses! Why, there's not a thing on that

other table I've ever seen before! Where ever did that punch-bowl come from? Oh, Ag, don't *tell* me that's another pair of candlesticks!

(*And so on, and so on.*)

Farce III

(*Seven Days before the Wedding*)

Same as Farce I.

Bride: It's a sight,—there! I won't wear it! (*Etc., etc.*)

Farce IV

(*Six Days before the Wedding*)

A sitting-room, charmingly furnished in white wicker and pink, purple and black cretonne. Bride at desk, writing. Waste-basket blossoming like a tree with torn bits of mauve paper. Floor strewn with fallen petals.

Maid of Honour (*bursting into room*): Bootie's got the measles!

Bride: What?

Maid of Honour: Bootie's got the measles!

Bride: You're crazy!

Maid of Honour: She has! If you don't believe it, come and see! If she looks half as much like a flower-girl as she does like a radish, I'll eat her.

BRIDE: Ag, this is terrible. What *shall* I do?

MAID OF HONOUR: You'll just have to use Janet.

BRIDE: What, that tiresome Bailey child?

MAID OF HONOUR: Well, really, Kay, I *wouldn't* talk that way about my own niece!

BRIDE: Can't help it. She *is* tiresome.

MAID OF HONOUR: She's prettier than Bootie, really.

BRIDE: What, with all those teeth sticking out? You're crazy!

MAID OF HONOUR: See here, Kay, don't you call me crazy again, or I'll drop this pot of ink on you and prove it! After all, you're not the first person that ever got married, you know!

BRIDE: No, and I sha'n't be the last. You just wait till you get married!

MAID OF HONOUR: Well, I don't mind saying that when I get married you won't know a thing about it, Katharine Schuyler. I've learned my lesson this time. Peggy was bad enough. But you're impossible. I shall just waltz around to a justice of the peace and get the dirty business over with.

BRIDE: That's all very well *now*, Ag. That's

what I said. But you wait. There's a time when one *has* to consider one's family.

Farce V

(*Five Days before the Wedding*)

Same as Farce I.

Bride: It's a sight,—there! I won't wear it! (*Etc., etc.*)

Farce VI

(*Four Days before the Wedding*)

Private room in a fashionable hotel. Nut-end of a Sorority Banquet. Bride and four of the Bridesmaids conspicuously present. Other sororae ranged about.

Chairman: We will now have a speech from Miss Katharine—grab her, Teazle! Don't let her get away!—a speech from Miss Katharine Schuyler. You will remember Miss Schuyler as the young woman who was never going to marry, who turned a bleak eye on all twosing, petting and promming, who was going to devote her life to archæological—

Voice from Rear: Aw, that was because she had a crush on the instructor! We were all going to do that!

Chairman: Silence, worm!—to archæolog-

ical research along the upper Nile. Miss Schuyler will now rise and make a speech. Teazle, let her up.

(*And so on and so on.*)

Farce VII

(*Three Days before the Wedding*)

Same as Farce I.

Bride: It's a sight,—there! I won't wear it! (*Etc., etc.*)

Farce VIII

(*Two Days before the Wedding*)

A bedroom, charmingly furnished in dove-grey and lilac. Reclining on the bed, with one foot supported by a pillow, the Third Bridesmaid. Standing by the bed, in the attitude of one rather too picked on by Fate, the Bride. Maid of Honour, and other Bridesmaids strewn about.

Bride: Oh, Dodie, you might have *known* you'd sprain your ankle! Why in the world anybody wants to go stumbling around the Palisades by moonlight—oh, what *ever* shall I do! If only it had happened to Chloe or Blanche instead!

FIFTH AND SIXTH BRIDESMAIDS (*together*): Well, I like that!

BRIDE: Oh, but you know what I mean! It would have been so much easier to find an extra girl with dark hair—or even a blonde! But no, of course it had to be one of the red-haired ones!

FIRST BRIDESMAID: Molly's red-headed.

BRIDE: But those freckles!—it would be different if it weren't in the day-time.

FOURTH BRIDESMAID: Why, Kay,—Sheila, of course! I wonder you didn't think of her long ago!

BRIDE: I did, silly! But I didn't know she was going to be here. She was the first one I thought of.

THE SIX BRIDESMAIDS (*together*): Well, *really*, Kay!

SECOND BRIDESMAID: I wonder which of us you would have left out, if you *had* known she was going to be here!

BRIDE (*flushing uncomfortably*): Don't be silly, Gwendolyn.

SECOND BRIDESMAID: I'm not silly. It's a very interesting thought.

BRIDE: Anyway, she'd poison me if I asked her now.

SIXTH BRIDESMAID: There's Harriet Martin.

THIRD BRIDESMAID: Oh, but Babbie, she could *never* get into my dress!

(*And so on and so on.*)

FARCE IX

(*Day before the Wedding*)

A bedroom, charmingly furnished in lemon-yellow and cerise. Stretched on the bed, with a wet towel about her temples, the Bride.

BRIDE (*in a high voice*): *I do.* No, that's too high. (*In a low voice*) *I do.*

MAID OF HONOUR (*entering*): No, that's too low. They'll think it's a couple of men getting married.

BRIDE: Ag, how many aspirins can you take before you turn blue?

MAID OF HONOUR: I don't know. How many have you taken?

BRIDE: Six, so far.

MAID OF HONOUR: Six! Well, I should say you'd be a nice deep ultramarine by the time the gun goes off.

BRIDE: Ag, what shall I wear that's old, and what shall I borrow?

MAID OF HONOUR: I don't know. Borrow

my lingerie-clasps, if you like; it won't be the first time.

BRIDE (*grimly resuming the rehearsal*): Ag, listen. "*I do.*" Is that too high?

MAID OF HONOUR: Yes. Altogether.

BRIDE: Well, how's this?—*I do*—no, that's not right—*I do*—oh, did you hear my voice crack?—I *know* it will do that to-morrow!—*I do*—no, wait a minute—*I do*—Ag, listen: which is the best?—*I do. I do. I do.*

MAID OF HONOUR (*bursting into shrieks of laughter*): Oh, Kay!

BRIDE (*sitting up in bed and cocking one eye at her from under the towel, with dignity*): Well, what's the matter?

MAID OF HONOUR (*rolling on the floor and gasping*): Oh, you're so funny!

BRIDE (*bursting into hysterical sobbing*): There I go again! Oh, ho, ho! She laughs! Ha, ha, ha! I'm funny, am I? Aw, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo, hoo!

(*And so on and so on.*)

FARCE X

(*Day of the Wedding*)

In front of a fashionable church. Street strewn with carriages, automobiles, gardenias, silk hats, etc. Entire cast assembled.

BEST MAN (*leaping from a carriage and waving a cablegram*): Wait! Wait! Read this, somebody! I can't! (*He faints.*)

DETECTIVE (*picking up cablegram and reading it aloud*): JUST ARRIVED PARIS. THOUGHT COULD BE MORE HELP BY GETTING OUT OF WAY THAN BY ANYTHING ELSE COULD DO.

(Signed) BRIDEGROOM.

BREAKFAST IN BED

BREAKFAST IN BED

Persons: Carey Turner, a prosperous monger of over-flavored motion-picture scenarios and other indigestible literary pastry.

Janet Turner, his wife, who thinks him almost as great a man as Mr. Griffith.

Time: The Living Present.

Place: Just West of the Park.

Scene: A bedroom, furnished caressingly and at the outlay of no contemptible expense in what might be termed the Lingerie Period —twin beds, dressing-table, writing-desk, etc., of hand-painted hepatica-lilac wood, with insertions of woven cane; hangings and counterpanes of lacerated-raspberry. On the dressing-table, suspended from one horn of the mirror, an arresting assortment of neckties; suspended from the other, six elaborate boudoir-caps which have never been worn; on the writing-desk note-paper and envelopes of dove-grey embossed in violet with an abandoned and inarticulate monogram, also two quill-pens, one black and one rose, which have never been

bitten; on the floor a large black rug; on the table between the beds an upright but rather crumpled doll, which rings instead of saying, "Mamma!" In one bed, asleep, Mrs. Turner: twenty-one, short black hair and straight bangs (formally Chinese), speed-well-blue pyjamas several sizes too large, heart-breakingly pretty. In the other bed, apparently asleep, Mr. Turner: twenty-six, smooth blonde hair, collar-advertisement chin and jaw, sardonic mouth —the ensemble rendered piquant by a nose that is undeniably retroussé. Nine o'clock of a spring morning. In the chamber a lurid gloom. Silence.

In the midst of this silence there comes a discreet tap at the door. Mrs. Turner lifts her arms above her head, stretches and sighs, then lapses again into slumber. The door opens slowly, and there enters the room a steaming tray, containing coffee, chocolate, toast, and two eggs sitting up like hour-glasses.

SHE (*sleepily*): Oh, good-morning, Anna. —Wait a minute. I'll stick the 'phone on the floor.

(*Anna deposits the tray on the table between the two beds.*)

SHE: Thanks.—Close the window, will you, Anna?—And hand me that thing on the foot of the bed. I just can't reach it.

(*Anna having softly retired, Mrs. Turner lies down again, sighs once more, closes her eyes, opens them, then sits up abruptly and thrusts her arms into her vermillion-satin and gold-bedragoned dressing-gown.*)

SHE: Carey! Oh, Carey! Here's breakfast again!

HE: Huh?

SHE: Breakfast! Breakfast!—Coffee, sweetheart, and lovely eggs!

HE: Oh, the devil!

SHE: Well, all right.—Oh, Carey, sit up, you lazy dog, and eat your breakfast! You can't lie here in bed all day to-day. I'm going to have the room cleaned.

HE (*sighing, and thrusting his nose into his pillow*): What's matter the room?

SHE: Oh, well—there's no use trying to explain. Here's your coffee, dear.

(*Without opening his eyes, Mr. Turner extends one arm and gropes about the seat of a chair beside the bed.*)

SHE: Oh, sweetheart, *must* you smoke

before breakfast? You know what the doctor said.

HE (*pinching a cigarette from a soft package and lighting it doggedly*): Well, he's paid, isn't he?—He should kick.

SHE: Oh, all right (*after watching him a moment, tremulously*). Six months ago you used to say you had to take care of your health for my sake.

(*He does not reply. He is staring at the end of his cigarette.*)

SHE (*gently*): Drink your coffee, dear, before it gets cold.

(*He picks up his coffee without focusing his eyes upon it.*)

SHE: There's a good boy.

(*There is silence for some minutes, save for that gentle sound of toast between the teeth of the well-bred.*)

SHE: Eat your egg, dearest.

HE (*musingly*): "Eat your egg, dearest." Oh, if I could only describe how I hate eggs, I'd be a great author.

(*She starts to say something, but decides not to. He sits lost in thought, absently pressing a buttered knife against a slice of toast.*)

SHE (*briskly*): You'd better eat it. You'll

be hungry before luncheon—and you know you're not supposed to eat between meals.

HE: Hm?—Oh. (*He seizes an egg and crushes in its skull with a knife-handle.*)

SHE: Oh, darling, why don't you use the cutter? It's ever so much easier.

HE: Cutter? Oh, those button-hole scissors. I should say not.

SHE: Well, all right—struggle. (*She scalps her egg neatly and wedges a spoon into it.*)

HE (*irritably*): Oh, dammit all! This is a hell of a way for a civilized man to eat an egg—out of the shell like a weasel!

(*She laughs, a lovely, bright sound that might be a bird on the window-sill. After which she considers him for a moment with a small, puckered smile.*)

SHE: Sweet old thing. You're so hateful this morning that you're cute.

(*He does not reply. He pours himself the rest of the coffee, and turns the sugar-bowl upside-down over his cup. There is a little splash, followed by a pause. As she drinks her chocolate, Mrs. Turner's eyes wander about the room.*)

SHE: Darling, don't you think that new waste-basket is sweet?

HE (*glancing up*): Mm—ayah. Very nice.

SHE: I came upon it yesterday quite by accident—I wasn't looking for waste-baskets at all—and I saw it in a window quite by accident, part of one of those sets, you know, that they're always arranging, with tall lamps, you know, and kimonos thrown carelessly over chairs.

(*He does not reply.*)

SHE: I thought it would just exactly match the quill-pen. But it doesn't—not quite.—Still, I rather like things a little bit off. (*She smiles, and regards the waste-basket with her head to one side.*)

(*Presently, as her husband does not reply, she glances at him. He is sitting with his coffee-cup half-way to his lips, on his face an expression of frozen horror, staring at the closet door.*)

SHE: For *heaven's* sake, Carey, what's the matter? What are you looking at?

(*He starts violently, and blinks, then begins calmly drinking his coffee.*)

HE: Beg your pardon, dear.

SHE: What in the world is the matter?

HE (*reaching for another cigarette*): Nothing. I was just thinking.

SHE: Mercy! If just thinking does that to you, I should say you might as well dream!

(*He does not reply. He lights a match, and holds it in his fingers until it wizens and chars, while he regards the window-curtain through narrowed lids.*)

SHE (*anxiously*): Dearest, *don't* let it burn your fingers!

HE (*with irritation*): Oh, for the love of—anybody'd think you taught me to smoke. (*He lights his cigarette angrily and drops the match into his coffee-cup.*)

SHE (*desolately*): I'm sorry. I just was afraid you'd burn your fingers. You're so absent-minded.

HE (*after a moment, absent-mindedly*): Er—beg your pardon, dear. (*There is a pause.*)

SHE (*aloud, but as if to herself, with a sudden heightening of spirits*): I know what I'll do. I'll do my nails. (*She throws back the covers, leaps to the black rug, and patters over to the dressing-table. Here, darting and peering like some gaudy, tropical bird, she collects a trayful of pastes, chalks, scissors, emery-boards, and little ivory playthings of different shapes and sizes. With these she returns to the bed and jumps in.*)

SHE (*after an industrious minute and a half*): Dearest, does the sound of this annoy you?

HE (*starting violently, and drawing in his gaze from the far corner of the room, where a little knob sticks out from the wall to keep the wall and door from ill-treating one another*): Hm—what?—What's that? Sound of what?

SHE (*in a tiny voice*): Oh.—I'm sorry.

(*He stares at her a moment, then picks up the package of cigarettes and lights one feverishly. Having done which, he reaches out for the telephone-directory and hoists it into bed with him.*)

SHE (*polishing the fingers of one hand on the palm of the other*): You mustn't forget to call up Flo, dear. She's expecting us, and she'll be terribly disappointed. But it can't be helped. (*She regards the tips of her fingers critically, then starts polishing again.*) Or shall I call her up?

HE (*running his eye slowly down a column*): Mm—you'd better call her up.

SHE (*musingly, inserting an orange-wood stick into a little pot of white paste and rubbing it gently under her left thumb-nail*): I've got to call up Dickey some time to-day.

(*He does not reply.*)

SHE (*stretching out her arm and wiggling her fingers, the nails of which are now whetted to that sinister degree of brilliancy at which it becomes possible to cut window-panes with them*): Look, sweetheart—aren't they beautiful? (*He does not reply.*)

SHE (*glancing up*): Can't you find the number, darling?

HE (*in a thundering voice, laying down the book*): What number?

SHE (*astonished*): Why, the number you're looking for, silly?

HE: I'm not looking for any number. I'm reading. (*He picks up the book again.*) You seem to forget you're married to a literary guy. (*He laughs a short laugh.*)

SHE (*quietly*): Well, really, Carey—I don't know when I've seen you in such a bad temper.

HE (*slapping the book together and hurling it at the footboard*): Oh, you don't—well, I do!—The *last* time I tried to work out a scenario in bed, and you decided, in your own inimitable way, you'd like to drive me crazy!

SHE (*pitifully, utterly contrite*): Oh, Carey, are you working out a scenario? I'm *so* sorry—*why* didn't you tell me?

HE: I *hate* to tell people. I like to just think about 'em without saying a word about 'em to anybody. When I begin to talk about 'em I get sick of 'em. (*He flings down the covers.*) I'm going to get up.

SHE (*jumping out of bed so hastily as to scatter the manicuring apparatus in all directions*): No, Carey—no, no, dear—you stay right there. *I'm* going to get up!

HE (*ungraciously*): Oh, it's no use now. (*He drops one foot to the floor.*)

SHE: Carey, *please! Please* stay there and think, dearest! If you don't I'll be so miserable I—(*she drags a small blue handkerchief from her pyjama pocket and presses it against her mouth for a moment, then continues, brightly*) Listen, darling, I have a wonderful idea, which will fix everything all right! I know I'm always bothering you when you're busy. You see, I can't tell when you're busy, and when you're just cross. People that work in their heads are *terribly* difficult. If you were a—a paper-hanger, or something, it would be *much* more simple to know when you were at work. But anyway, the only thing for us to do is this: (*She pauses for a moment: her lip quivers, and she twists her little handkerchief*) I'll move

into the blue guest-room. We don't need two guest-rooms. And you can have this room all to yourself. After a while you can—you can get a larger bed—we can—sell these, maybe—(*she turns abruptly and starts toward the door*).

HE (*leaping to his feet*): Janet!

SHE (*brightly, not looking around*): Get back into bed, dear. I won't bother you again until luncheon—Carey! (*with a shriek*) Don't you come near me! Don't you touch me!

HE (*huskily, catching her in his arms*): If you think I'm going to sleep in this room with that other bed empty—as if you'd died, or something—(*he gulps*)—or sell—*sell* those—oh, my sweetheart, are you crying?

SHE (*bursting into a flood of tears and laying her head on his shoulder*): Of course I'm crying! My heart is broken!

HE: Oh, *don't*, honey! Oh, I'm a brute!

SHE (*sobbing*): You're no such thing! It's all my fault! I'm always trying to think of something to help you, and all the time I'm just ruining your life!

HE (*kissing the top of her head*): Hush—hush, dear. I couldn't live without you—if that's what you call ruining my life.

SHE (*wildly*): But I want to *help* you! That's what I want, to help *you!*

HE: There—there. You do help me, darling. (*He takes his handkerchief and tenderly dries her wet cheeks.*) It's a help just having you around.

CURTAIN

SHIPS AND SEALING-WAX

SHIPS AND SEALING-WAX

"THE time has come," the walrus said, "to stop talking of many things: notably, of the Einstein Theory; of home-made liquor; of sex; and of women's bathing-costumes."

"But what *will* people talk about?" Alice inquired, wistfully, for the earnest interchange of piffling commonplaces was as breath to her nostrils.

"Perhaps they will stop talking!" cried the walrus; and a little colour found its way into his pale cheek.

"Nonsense!" said Alice.

"At any rate," the walrus continued, "if people don't stop talking about the Einstein Theory—"

"What *is* the Einstein Theory?" Alice interrupted.

"That is just the point!" he cried. "I don't know. And it is too late now to ask. For, ah, I have pretended to know. My child,—" here his voice quavered, and leaning forward

he laid a flappish hand upon her head. "My child, never pretend to know."

"Oh, but sometimes you have to!" Alice demurred. For she was a finished young woman and moved in the best trapezoids.

"You do not!" shouted the walrus, his beard curling with fury. "Have you never heard the old adage: Hell is Paved with Good Pretensions? I say to you: Be warned ere it is too late. Look at me. Consider the predicament in which I find myself. If people very soon don't stop talking about the Einstein Theory, I shall have to buy a book and—"

"Oh, but surely you can borrow one!" cried Alice.

"Not any more," sighed he.

"The second subject I bring to your attention," said the walrus, presently, "is that of the domestic brew composed exclusively of foreign properties. The time has come when this subject should be dropped,—and softly, mind you, with no splash, no crash, even, as of splintered glass—from the conversational repertory of all right-minded people. I am sure that everyone present will agree with me."

"Aye, aye," said Alice unanimously.

"This brings us to the subject of sex. I wish," said the walrus, "—what's the matter with you?" he interrupted himself, fretfully. For Alice had begun feverishly to scratch about in her vanity-bag, and the clatter set up by a hand-mirror, a silver shoe-horn, several loose nickels, some safety-pins, a platinum cigarette-case, a cork-screw, a wrist-watch with a broken strap and a bunch of wardrobe-trunk keys, was nothing short of deafening.

"Can I look for my powdapuf or can't I?" snapped Alice. And producing the article in question, she proceeded to encrust her countenance with a thin layer of white lead.

"All right now. Go on," said she, when she had finished, and composed herself to listen.

The walrus cleared his throat and, his desire to express his opinions being very strong, decided that her interruption had been a warranted one.

"As I was saying," he continued, smiling at Alice benignantly, "I wish people would stop talking about it. It is getting on my nerves. Wherever you go, morning, noon or night, everybody sitting around looking frank, and spading about in one another's ill-smelling

unconsciousnesses. 'So you dreamed of water? —Aha! You say it doubtless is due to the fact that you have been forty-eight days without a drink. Aha!—You *think* it is!'

"You have heard, perhaps," the walrus continued, turning to his companion, "of Mr. S. Freud, author of the popular ballad entitled *Tell Me What You Dream and I Will Tell You What You Want*?"

"Oh, yes," said Alice, "rather. I should think so."

"Well," concluded the walrus, "I should like to kick his corduroys."

"Of course," the walrus began again, after a moment's blissful revery, "there is one advantage held by the subject of sex over many subjects of conversation. Now, for example, have you ever had peritonitis?"

"No," said Alice.

"Well, I *have*. So there's that. How about parotiditis?"

"Oh, yes," cried Alice, proudly, "on both sides!"

"Well, I *haven't*. So there's that. Perhaps you have had spinal meningitis, as well?"

"No. I'm afraid I haven't."

"Well, neither have I. So there's that."

There ensued a widening silence.

"There, do you see my point?" cried the walrus, triumphantly. "*I* don't want to hear what *you've* had, and *you* don't want to hear what *I've* had. Nobody is interested in anybody else. As for what neither of us has had, well, obviously it's not worth having. Taking it all in all, the conversation lags, doesn't it?"

"Dear me, yes," said Alice. "Do get on."

"My question was purely rhetorical," said the walrus, dyspeptically. "Don't interrupt me! As I was saying: the conversation lags. But take now the subject of sex. Sex is an epidemic. Everybody has it, or has had it, in one form or another. Do you see my point? 'Come,' says our host, 'let's sing something we all know!' And—yip! Everybody starts yowing at once, like so many cats on a fence, and a good time is had by all.

"Now I should be the last to deny," the walrus continued, "that sex is a very useful commodity, and one that no home should be without. But there is a time for all things, except for having your gold fillings replaced by porcelain, and I do staunchly hold and maintain that the time for the consideration

of the subject in hand is by no means before luncheon, during bridge, or whilst you are endeavouring to discover just why the engine goes *zugg* instead of *zuzz*. Am I right?"

"You have," said Alice.

"But you *have* to talk about *something*!" she objected, plaintively, after a moment's troubled thought. "Otherwise everybody would hear you swallowing your tea!"

"Don't drink tea!" snapped the walrus.

"Oh, now," said Alice, indulgently, "you *are* being ridiculous."

"Well anyhow," the walrus resumed, "there are plenty of things to talk about. Take, for instance, bats. Bats are very interesting people. They sleep hanging up, like so many weskits in a wardrobe. And nobody ever mentions them. Then there is arsenic. Take arsenic,—"

"Why, I shall do no such thing!" cried Alice, indignantly.

"A very lovely drug.

"And of course," he went on, "there is always the amusing problem: if a flea were as big as an elephant, would his body crush his legs? Oh, there are plenty of things to talk about."

"That may be," Alice admitted. "But will

they ever be as interesting as the old things? For instance, in place of the subject of sex what would you suggest as a topic of conversation?"

"In place of the subject of sex I would suggest as a topic of conversation—" said the walrus, and was silent.

"You see," said Alice, "it *is* difficult. As you yourself remarked, sex is something we all have, in one form or another—"

"But it's not the *only* thing!" the walrus snorted, contemptuously, having just thought of something. "No, there is today one other great interest which everybody has in common. Everybody has—" he paused dramatically.

"Well, *what?*" she prodded, with some impatience. They had been sitting side by side all this time, like two sparrows on a wire, and the conversation was beginning to make her neck ache.

"Indigestion!" shouted the walrus.

"Ah, yes," sighed Alice, tossing six black pellets into a dipper of hot water.

"Let us from now on fill the conversational gaps with the log of our gastronomic piracies!"

"A *sweet* idea!" cried Alice.

"Which brings us," said the walrus, "to the

subject of women's bathing-costumes, which I should dearly love to enlarge upon. But unfortunately, I have left this till the last. And as the old chronicle has it, 'The first shall be first, and the last shall be left on the platform.' "

"I should like to hear what you have to say," said Alice, with relief, preparing to rise. "But as you haven't time—"

"Wrong again!" snapped the walrus. "I have time, but no space. My eighteen-hundred-words is up. I will, however, make so bold as to scribble in the margin this final remark: That there is one matter which the Associated Press and United Police Force would do well to take up in place of the matter of Women's Bathing-Costumes."

"And that?" questioned Alice, politely.

"That?" shouted the walrus over his shoulder, as he made off, turning his cuffs, "Men's Bathing-Costumes!"

CORDIALLY YOURS

If You Are at a Loss as to How to Word it, Study Carefully Our New Impolite Letter-Writer.

CORDIALLY YOURS

LETTER to Person who has made you a Proposal of Marriage, Rejecting him.

Sir:

Do you take me for an idiot? For four seasons I have parried the advances of the talented, the titled, the handsome-as-Apollo, and the verminous-with-wealth. It was for me Paderewski took up politics, for me D'Annunzio became a soldier. The Grand Duke Michael has begged for my photograph in three languages and Russian, Freud has dreamed of me, Muratore has asked me to sing Celeste Aida to him by the hour, a Communist once gave me his seat in a street-car, a Count has run off with my pocket-book, and a King has made a pun about me. For what do you think I am waiting?—for you? Be reasonable!

As for the day we got caught in a shower on

Lake George and were obliged to go ashore and seek shelter under the canoe together, I can only say that such accidents happen to us all. I take cold very easily. And you were the only dry spot for miles around.

Cordially yours,

LETTER to Person who has made you a Proposal of Marriage, Accepting him.

Dear Sir:

It has been raining all day, everybody received mail but me, and we had calf's-brains for luncheon. I have been thinking over what you said.

You are far from being my girlish ideal of a Prince Charming. If anybody had told me ten years ago that I should some day marry a man like yourself, I should have guffawed in her face. But there is no denying that I am twenty-eight years old, and that my arms are getting thin.

Of course there are things about you that would drive me frantic in a month's time,—the way you always let every car on the road get past you, for instance; the fact that you never

know when the Victrola is running down; the way you always read aloud the passages in books which strike you as being funny; and the fatuous way you have of talking about New York as if you had just given birth to it. But all men, even the clever and good-looking ones, are irritating at times.

On the whole, I have decided to take you.

You are not so tall as I like them, but I think you are tall enough so that we won't look ridiculous together. And you have money enough so that I shall be able to dress twice as well as ever before; I look forward with eagerness to spending your money.

Of course, it is a very serious decision that I am making. I am conscious that I am not bringing down what you would call a brilliant match. Yet, considering it carefully from all sides, the idea does not on the whole appear so screamingly funny as, at first, it struck me.

Cordially yours,

P. S. I have a dreadful feeling that as soon as we are married you will begin calling me Little Woman. But if you bore me too much,

I can always get a divorce; and I shall stand a much better chance the next time.

CRUSH letter to Actor, accompanying Pair of Embroidered Carpet-Slippers.

Sir:

Do not leap at once to the conclusion that these slippers which I am sending were embroidered for you by my own fair hand. They were given to my husband as a Christmas present by his invalid aunt, and we haven't known what in the world to do with them; finally I thought of you. I had always wished to send you some little token of my interest in your work, and it occurred to me that these hideous objects would do quite as well as anything else for you to hurl through the door at your stage-manager.

Sir, there is nothing I would rather do than watch you act. I will leave anything to go to see you,—gossip, a hat-show, salted pecans, the only hammock, anything. Not that you act well,—you don't; nobody knows that better than yourself. But your voice, fretful with dyspepsia and husky with gin, thrills me to the core of my being; and you have the most beau-

tiful legs that ever I saw on mortal man. Believe me, there is nobody on the stage today for whom I see ahead the future that I see for you, —a future of orchids, villas in Nice, wrinkle eradicators, and delirium tremens.

Of course, it would be very fine to be a real artist, to lose one's own personality in that of the character, never to call into play quite all one's *vox-angelica-diapason-tremolo* to ask for the mustard with, nor sit too often in tights on the edge of a table, leaning back on one's bejewelled hands. A fine thing, I repeat, it must be, to be a real artist; but oh, sir, how much greater a thing it is to give pleasure to thousands of people!

Cordially yours,

LETTER to Person who has just sent you an Announcement of her Wedding, whose Name seems Vaguely Familiar, but whose Features you Cannot Recall.

Madam:

Of what possible interest to me you may consider the fact of your approaching nuptials, I cannot imagine. To each of us, of course, his

own birth, death, and other vital statistics assume an importance far in excess of their significance as national catastrophes. But why, when one is about to plunge oneself simperingly into a shallow sea of cooked breakfast-food, one should wish a crowd of spectators lining the bank, is beyond my powers to conjecture.

It may be (and this seems more reasonable) that you are merely passing around a bunch of engraved hand-bills, in the hope of beating from cover a few lemon-forks, pie-knives, asparagus - tweezers, red - and - yellow candlesticks, player-pianos, motor-boats, long leases on apartments in town, and lots in the country with shore frontage. In that case, what a task has been yours! Hunting up the names and addresses of cousins, second-cousins, cousins-by-marriage; boarding-school mates of whom you used to ridicule the rubbers, the side-combs, the drag with the principal, the class-room recitations, the bed-room confidences, and the visiting relations; college chums of your fiancé whom he once endeavoured with desperate zeal to keep out of his fraternity; town-acquaintances to whose houses you go to call and leave your card on occasions when you have reason to believe they will be absent from

home; people you met on the boat crossing from Cherbourg; people you met on the train going to Colorado Springs; golf-instructors, hair-dressers, osteopaths, former suitors and former chauffeurs.

Ah, surely, no one but the hardest-hearted person in the world could fail to assist you in this, your pretty, twittering attempt to furnish your little home, could fail to take the first bus to Tiffany's and, sweeping the entire contents of two show-cases into a dry-goods box, have the glittering baubles boarded up and shipped to you with a modest card,—no one but the hardest-hearted person in the world, I repeat, could fail, upon receipt of this touching appeal which lies before me in slightly crumpled condition, to rush out at once and go galloping up and down the Avenue, buying up for you all the things he has wanted all his life for himself, and never been able to afford.

Madam, I am that person.

Cordially yours,

LETTER to President of United States, who one Evening took Dinner at your House, and wanted Something to Read on the Train.

Sir:

Do not presume to disregard this letter. It has to do with your personal welfare. I would advise you to give it your close attention.

I think you will agree with me that a man who is negligent, procrastinating, dishonest and acquisitive in his private life, is unworthy to stand publicly at the head of a great nation. He should be put down from his place. Is it not so? And it should be the duty, nay, let us say the pleasure, of any citizen in possession of evidence against that man to bring about that man's confusion by fair means or foul, but preferably by foul.

Sir, you are all these things and more. You are a dirty thief.

Where is my copy of *Jurgen?*

Give it back to me.

If I do not receive it by return mail, I shall throw a quart of Scotch into a suit-case, take a flying trip to your little old White House, and do myself the honour of pushing in your face. Cordially yours,

LETTER to Hostess with whom you have just been spending a Fortnight in the Country.

Dear Madam:

Home again,—and so glad to be here I could cry! Have just had my first decent cup of coffee in two weeks. Why you do not persuade your Japanese jiu-jitsu artist to commit hari-kiri and get a cook, I cannot surmise.

Of course, it was not your fault that it rained all the time I was at your house, but really, a hostess should have some resources. After five days of unmitigated Mah Jong, one would welcome with almost tearful eagerness a well-organized little toboggan-slide down the front stairs on a silver tea-tray, or an English music-hall ballad earnestly rendered by the butler.

What a house! And what a crew of guests! Not a dance-record newer than *Too Much Mustard*, and the only man present who could get away with anything more advanced than a waltz-and-two-step, laid up, directly after luncheon on the first day out, with ivy-poisoning accumulated on your nasty, mercury-infested estate.

Mother says I am looking tired, and suggests that I take a complete rest. I tell her that is just what I don't need.

Cordially yours,

P. S. If you should happen to come across two rather good-looking crêpe de chine night-gowns, a mauve wool sweater, a Florentine stamped-leather cigarette-case, and a platinum wrist-watch kicking around somewhere, you might send them back to me.

THE END

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